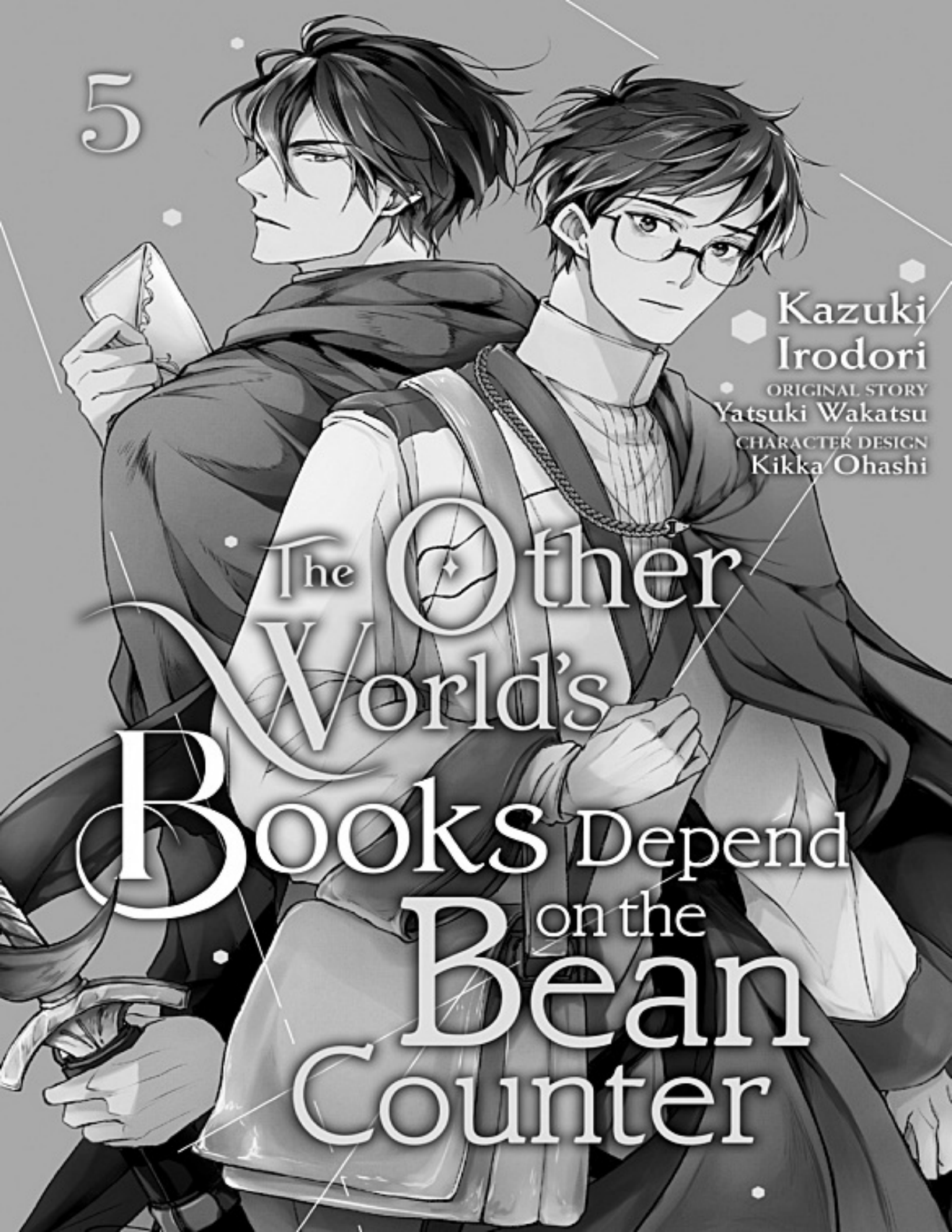
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Kazuki Irodori
ORIGINAL STORY
Yatsuki Wakatsu
CHARACTER DESIGN
Kikka Ohashi
The Other World's Books Depend on the Bean Counter

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THE OTHER WORLD'S BOOKS
DEPEND ON THE BEAN COUNTER

YOU BUREAU-CRATS ARE THE WORST!
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, THEN!
!
Chapter 25
?
?
YOU AGAIN ...?
I'M HERE TO GET THE JOB DONE.
DID SELIO...? NO, I PROBABLY DON'T NEED TO ASK.
THAT KID, SERIOUS-LY...

OH...!
...ARE YOU PROVOKING HIM TO STOP HIM FROM MONITORING YOU?
OF COURSE NOT!
HE HASN'T LIKED ME FROM THE START.
HE'S VERY DEVOUT IN HIS FAITH, BUT HOW BLUNT HE IS REGARDING HIS FEELINGS IS CONCERNING.
WELL... I SUPPOSE MOST BOYS HIS AGE ARE LIKE THAT.
I'VE NOTICED THAT... HE HAS A STRONG INFERIORITY COMPLEX WHEN IT COMES TO...
...NOBLES OR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.
IF THEY WERE FULLY AWARE OF THAT WHEN THEY APPOINTED SELIO AS MY GUIDE, THEN...
...THE CHURCH MUST HARBOR A FAIR AMOUNT OF ILL WILL TOWARD THE PALACE.

.....
THE MAJORITY OF THEM ARE COMMONERS... SO THEY TEND TO INSTINCTIVELY REVOLT AGAINST ANYONE FROM THE CASTLE...
NOT THAT THEY'RE ALL LIKE THAT, OF COURSE.
SOME OF THE CHILDREN TRAINING TO BECOME MONKS HAVE NO FAMILY WHATSOEVER.
THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT.
...SO I CAN'T ASSIGN A NEW ONE, EVEN IF I'D LIKE TO.
THE BISHOP IS THE ONE WHO APPOINTS OUR GUIDES HERE...
...WOULD DEFINITELY RESULT IN FORMING A DIFFERENT SET OF VALUES.
BEING RAISED IN SUCH ISOLATION FROM A YOUNG AGE...
...THE LIVES OF THOSE STUDYING HERE ARE TIED TO THEIR WORK ROUND THE CLOCK.
THE TOWNSFOLK MAY HELP OUT NOW AND THEN, BUT THE CHURCH IS STILL OPEN AT ALL HOURS, SO...

LUNCH
KAPA
CPAK
AREN'T SAFE?
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU BROUGHT LUNCH AGAIN?
YES, I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, SINCE MANY DISHES AREN'T SAFE FOR ME TO EAT.
IT'S UNHEALTHY FOR ME TO INGEST FOODS WITH TOO MANY MAGICULES ...
?
AH...
I OVERDOSE ON MAGICULES WHEN I CONSUME TOO MANY.
YOU... OVER-DOSE?
!?
OPPO-SITE EFFECT ?
HEALING SPELLS LIKE THOSE FROM HOLY MAGIC HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT ON ME, SINCE I HAVE NO RESISTANCE TO MAGICAL ENERGY EITHER...
TO PUT IT SIMPLY, I GET FATIGUED FROM NAUSEA AND VERTIGO.

I WAS CALLED WEAKER THAN A NEW-BORN.
I'VE HEARD AS MUCH.
DOESN'T THAT ONLY HAPPEN TO INFANTS?
MAGIC-SICK TO THE POINT OF A FEVER...
THEY HEAL MY WOUNDS OR MY SICKNESS, BUT THE SPELLS MAKE ME MAGIC-SICK AND CAUSE ME TO BREAK OUT IN A FEVER.
AND THE HOLY MAIDEN...
BUT... AREN'T YOU A DISCIPLE ...?
DIVINE PROTEC-TION...
.....
... RECEIVES DIVINE PROTEC-TION?
MAYBE THE PERSON OFFICIALLY SUMMONED HERE AS THE HOLY MAIDEN...
SO THAT MEANS YOU...
SHOULD I HAVE KEPT THIS TO MYSELF?
HE DOESN'T SEE MY EXISTENCE HERE AS HERESY BUT AS SOMEONE HIS GOD ALSO SUMMONED.

EXCUSE ME?
...MUST BE THE TRIBULATED DISCIPLE!
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
I THINK I JUST FLIPPED A SWITCH!
IT RAISES US UP AND DRAWS US CLOSER TO GOD'S HEART.
HERE WE ALSO UNDERGO TRIALS SO THAT WE MAY CONVEY GOD'S WILL TO THE MASSES.
GOD'S WILL HAS ALLOWED YOU TO TRAVEL THROUGH WORLDS AND COME TO THIS PLACE. THE FACT THAT YOU CAN'T ADAPT TO THIS WORLD CAN ONLY MEAN GOD IS TESTING YOU.
SAME TYPE
THIS IS SOME EXTREME DÉJÀ VU!

I KNOW HE'S DOING IT OUT OF RESPECT, BUT AT THIS RATE, I REALLY WILL BECOME KNOWN AS "THE TRIBULATED DISCIPLE"...

HE MIGHT EVEN FORCE ME TO UNDERGO MONASTIC TRAINING...

NO, I'M MERELY AN ORDINARY PERSON WHO HAPPENED TO BE THERE WHEN THE HOLY MAIDEN WAS SUMMON—

THAT'S NOT TRUE!

ABRAN WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING WITHOUT A PURPOSE!

NO, I'M TELLING YOU...

...I JUST TOUCHED HER HOLINESS AND ENDED UP—

GATAN (CLACK)

ガタンッ

MEANING CAN BE FOUND IN ALL GOD DOES.

EVEN IF WE HUMANS MAY SEE IT AS A MERE COINCIDENCE...

PAAAAA (BEEEAM)
はぁあああ…
OOF…
……
SURE, WHY NOT?
※DECIDED TO IGNORE HIM
…THAT TOO IS THE WILL OF GOD.

GACHA (KACHAK)
WORKING ON A DAY OFF AGAAAIN?
DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO, SEI?
I CAN DO WHAT I PLEASE ON MY DAYS OFF, NO?
HMMM, I GUESS SO...
PATAN (SHUT)
HE'S BASICALLY TELLING ME THIS IS A CONCERN WITH MANAGEMENT, BUT...
...HE'S STILL GETTING IN THE WAY.
じっ…
JI (STARE)
?
IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE THEN...
...AND WHENEVER I RUN INTO THE PRIEST AT THE CHURCH, HE'S VERY INTENSE.
HAAAH...
パラパラパラ…
PARA PARA PARA
PARA (FWIP)

ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT UNTIL WE WERE APART...
I WAS REALLY BLESSED TO FIND A PLACE IN THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT...
...WHERE NO ONE INTERFERES WITH MY WORK.
WHERE ARE YOU HEADED, SEI?
THE SORCERY DEPART-MENT.
NO... I STILL SEE ARESH-SAMA AT HOME EVERY DAY.
WHY DID I THINK OF HIM JUST NOW!?

IT'S KONDOU, THE VICE DIRECTOR OF THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT.
KON (KNOCK)
KON
SHIIN (HUSH)
PARDON ME.
DOSASA (FRRRP)

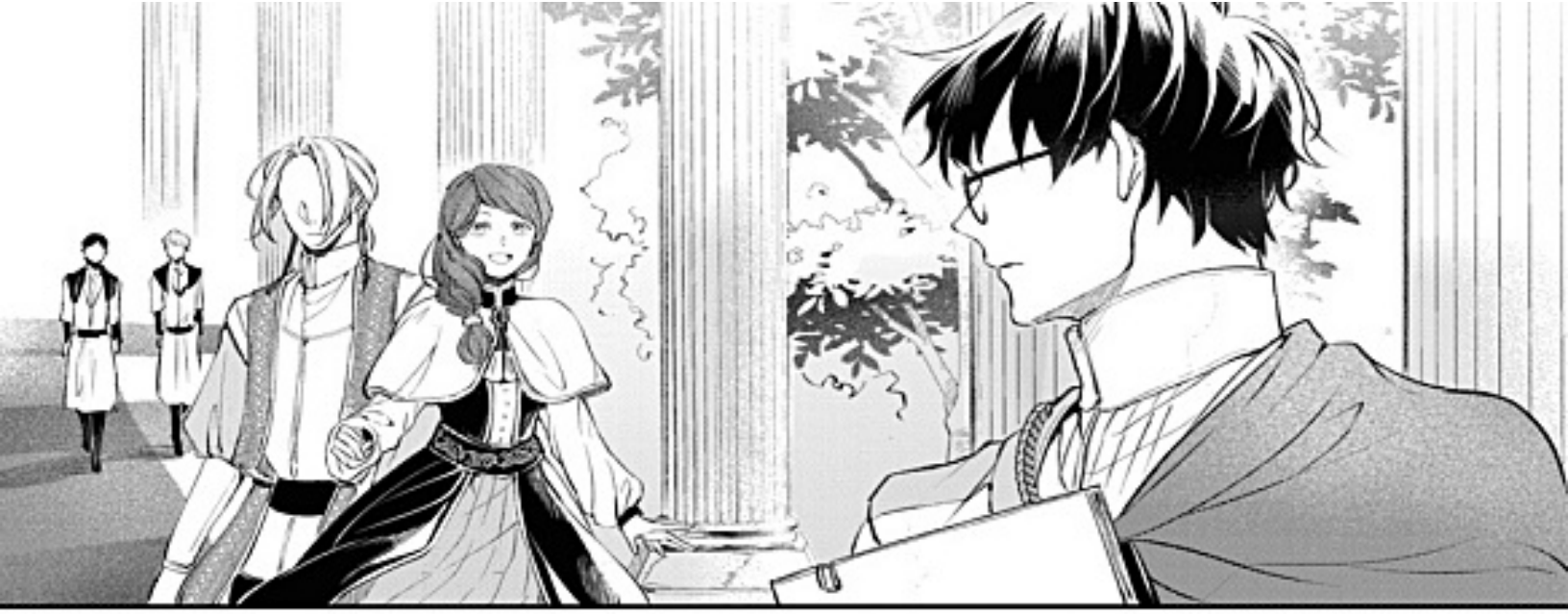
SOOO (SNEAK)
???
THE EXPEDITION ISN'T THEIR ONLY JOB.
THEY'RE HELPING TO RESEARCH RETURN MAGIC THAT WILL ALLOW US TO GO BACK TO OUR ORIGINAL WORLD TOO.
I'VE ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER TO HELP SECURE RESEARCHERS FOR THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT, BUT...
...THEY SAY THEY'RE HAVING TROUBLE FINDING THE PROPER SPECIALISTS.
IGLOO
I THOUGHT WORKING WITH MAGIC WAS A SHOW OF STATUS, BUT...
...THE MORE I SEE OF THEM, THE MORE I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.
IST-SAN.
IST-SAN, IT'S KONDOU.
MMMPH...

BUT THE MAN BEFORE ME IS ACTUALLY THE BEST SORCERER OF THEM ALL.
THE MAN IN CHARGE IS A NOBLE AND WON HIS CURRENT SEAT...
BORI (RUB) BORI
HE LOOKS YOUNG, BUT HE'S THIRTY YEARS OLD LIKE ME.
VICE DIRECTOR 1ST IS THE SECOND-IN-COMMAND OF THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT, WHICH CARRIES THIS COUNTRY ON ITS SHOULDERS.
IT'S STRANGELY NOSTALGIC FOR ME.
IT REMINDS ME OF MY FORMER WORKPLACE, WHICH TRANSFORMED INTO A GRAVEYARD OF SYSTEMS ENGINEERS BEFORE DEADLINES.
...THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT IS CRUCIAL IN THIS WORLD.
WHILE I WAS A BIT SURPRISED WHEN I FIRST VISITED...
NO, IT'S THE AFTER-NOON.
TO BE SPECIFIC, IT'S THE EVENING WATER HOUR.
POSUN (FWUMP)
LOOK AT THAT BED HEAD...
I'M HERE FOR YOUR PROGRESS REPORT.
PHEW...
HUH? IT'S MORNING ALREADY?

IT'S ONLY BEEN SIX DAYS.
YOUR PROGRESS REPORT, PLEASE.
AH, KONDOU... LONG TIME NO SEEEE!
PAYA (BEAM)
EVEN WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND THE STUFF IST-SAN SAYS...
PARALLEL WORLD PEOPLE ARE CRAZY...
KARI
KARI (SCRITCH)
BUT NOT ONLY IS THAT GUY KEEPING UP WHILE TAKING NOTES, HE'S ALSO USING THAT WEIRD TOOL?
KOOOOO (SHOOOM)
HE USES UNUSUAL VOCABULARY AND OFTEN STRAYS OFF-TOPIC... THE WAY HE SPEAKS IS TOO UNIQUE...
ARE OTHER-WORLDERS ALL LIKE HIM?
PACHI (CLACK)
PACHI

OHH.....
NO... I THINK HE'S JUST A STRANGE GUY LIKE IST...
I SEE. UNDERSTOOD.
KA (SKRT) カッ'"
WOOOW! YOU SUMMED IT UP SO WELL!
I COULD NEVER SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT LIKE THAT.
THAT'S WHY I CAME TO TALK.
WITHOUT PERIODIC PROGRESS REPORTS, WE CAN'T DISTRIBUTE THE BUDGET OR REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES.
'KAAAY ...
ALL RIGHT... TO SUM UP THIS REPORT ...
...YOU NEED MONEY NOT ONLY FOR PERSONNEL BUT FOR THE TOOLS REQUIRED FOR YOUR RESEARCH AS WELL.
WHAT? YOU'LL BUY THEM FOR US!?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT.
I NEED TO CHECK OVER MY CALCU-LATIONS FIRST.

YOU'RE GOING TO A CHURCH, KONDOU?
I'LL BE AT THE CHURCH TOMORROW, SO I CAN'T COME HERE.
WHEN?
WHEN WILL YOU BUY THEM? TOMORROW?
I TOLD YOU— I'M NOT BUYING ANYTHING YET.
THEN BRING ME...
...A SACRED RELIC.
THAT'S CLEARLY OUT OF THE QUESTION.
.....
HAAH
GOSH...
SLEEPING ON THE FLOOR HURTS MY BODY.
IT RUINS NOT ONLY MY SLEEP QUALITY BUT MY ABILITY TO WORK EFFICIENTLY TOO.
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE THEM MAKE A NAP ROOM.
KON-DOU-SAN!



IT'S A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN AS WELL, PRINCE YURIUS.
HMPH...

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
YES, IT HAS.

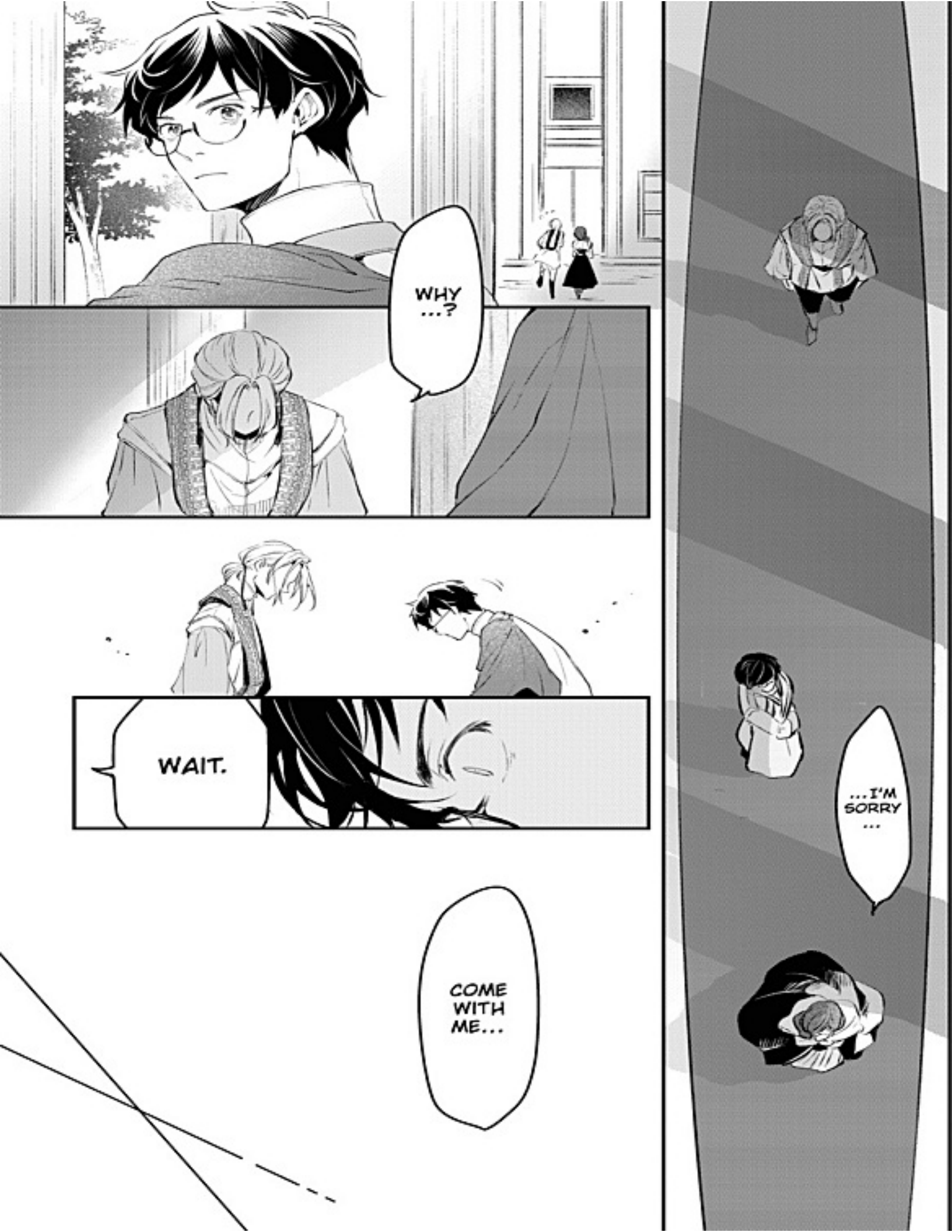
I HEARD YOU'LL BE AWAY AWHILE FOR WORK-RELATED REASONS, KONDOU-SAN...
KURU (TURN)

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE.

I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED TO ANOTHER LOCATION, BUT...
...I HAVE THE DAY OFF, SO I CAME HERE.
COMING TO WORK IN YOUR UNIFORM ON A DAY OFF?
YOU MUST HAVE A LOT ON YOUR PLATE...
BUT YOUR ASSIGNMENT MUST BE CLOSE IF YOU CAN STILL COME HERE, RIGHT?
YES, IT'S THE CHURCH IN THE ROYAL CAPITAL.
WAIT...THE CHURCH? I'M GOING THERE TOO!
WHAT SORTS OF THINGS DO YOU DO THERE?
LET'S SEE...
I PURIFY PEOPLE WHO ARE UNWELL, HEAL THE INJURED—
THOSE SORTS OF THINGS.
I'M REALLY GLAD THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS FOR ME TO DO!
SHE'S QUITE LIVELY.
SEEMS SHE'S FOUND A PURPOSE HERE.

...OH.
HE'S A HANDSOME BOY WHO'S TRAINING TO BECOME A MONK!
HE'S SO KIND, AND HE TEACHES ME ALL SORTS OF THINGS.
KIRIRI (GLINT)
SELIO-KUN IN PARTIC-ULAR.
!?
I'M JUST THERE TO DO PAPERWORK, SO I RARELY GO NEAR PLACES LIKE THE CHAPEL.
...EVEN THOUGH I GO TO THE CHURCH EVERY DAY.
IT'S A LITTLE ODD THAT WE HAVEN'T RUN INTO EACH OTHER YET...
YUA.
AH... I SEE. RIGHT AT THE ALMSHOUSE TOO—
WELL... THE CHURCH IS QUITE LARGE AFTER ALL.

YOU'RE THE HOLY MAIDEN. THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO WORK.
PRINCE YURIUS...
...AS I'VE SAID MANY TIMES, I WANT TO HELP HOWEVER I CAN.
BUT... YOU NEED ONLY TO PURIFY THE—
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH ...!
AH...


WHY ...?
WAIT.
COME WITH ME...
...I'M SORRY ...

WHY ...!?
WHY IS YUA NOW REJECTING ME!?
WHY DOES SHE RELY ON SOMEONE WEAK AND POWERLESS LIKE YOU INSTEAD !?
ANSWER ME, KONDOU!
HE PRONOUNCED MY NAME CORRECTLY...
THEIR INTENTIONS ARE AT ODDS...
...AND ONCE YOUR IMPRESSION OF SOMEONE CHANGES, IT'S HARD TO FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT THEM.
WHAT DOES HE WANT ME TO SAY?
HE'S ASKING ME WHY...BUT A LITTLE REFLECTION SHOULD HELP HIM UNDERSTAND...

...I THINK ...
...HER HOLINESS AND YOUR HIGHNESS HAVE GROWN APART FROM A DIFFERENCE IN VALUES.
VALUES ?
HOW COULD THEY BE DIFFERENT WHEN YUA COMES FROM A NOBLE FAMILY?
I'M AFRAID THE COUNTRY WE COME FROM DOESN'T HAVE NOBILITY.
ALTHOUGH WE USED TO, THE SYSTEM WAS ABOLISHED.
IT WAS?
STILL, YUA IS THE HOLY MAIDEN, SO...
...SHE DESERVES TO BE TREATED KINDLY.
HOWEVER, LATELY SHE'S BEEN GETTING UPSET WHENEVER I TRY TO BE KIND TO HER.
...MOST LIKELY, SHE WANTS TO SHOW A BIT OF RESTRAINT.
SHE DOESN'T WANT TO FEEL LIKE SHE OWES HIM. OR TO PUT IT MORE SIMPLY, SHE DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO SERVE HER.

SHE WANTS TO RETURN TO OUR WORLD, BUT...
...THE KINGDOM DESIRES HER TO REMAIN HERE AND HAVE CHILDREN.
SHE WISHES TO DISTANCE HERSELF FROM THOSE WHO SPOILED HER WITHOUT LETTING DETAILS THAT WOULD INCON-VENIENCE THEM SLIP.
HOWEVER, THE KINGDOM IS TRYING TO KEEP THEIR HOLY MAIDEN SO SHE CAN BE USED AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL IN DIPLOMACY AND POLITICS.
IT'S QUITE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO FIND A MIDDLE GROUND WHEN YOU THINK IT OVER.

.....
HAAH...
...I'VE HEARD ENOUGH... LEAVE ME.
I'LL BE GOING, THEN.

HM?
I WAS PLANNING TO DO SOME RESEARCH IN THE PALACE LIBRARY THIS AFTERNOON, BUT NOW I'M COMPLETELY BEHIND SCHEDULE.
I MUST HURRY...
IT'S ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER...
KOTSU (CLACK)
HE USED ME TO BLOW OFF STEAM...

HELLO, CAPTAIN MAKOVSKA.
IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

PLEASE JUST LET ME WORK!

DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?
FORGIVE ME, BUT I HAVE BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.

IT WON'T TAKE LONG!
.....

KYORO (GLANCE)
KYORO
きょろきょろ...
COME IN.
I WAS ONCE ATTACKED BY KNIGHTS.
IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT I FEEL UNEASY AROUND THEM...
...AND WISH TO AVOID THEM.
DON'T BE AFRAID.
NOT TO WORRY. THE KNIGHTS WHO ASSAULTED YOU AREN'T HERE ANYMORE.
JUST RELAX.
THIS IS A KNIGHTS' OFFICE.
THAT MEANS ARESH-SAMA IS PROBABLY AROUND!
GYAAAAH!
//RESTRAINED//
WORK
IT'LL BE A NIGHTMARE IF HE FINDS OUT I'M AT WORK ON MY DAY OFF!
HE MIGHT EVEN LOCK ME IN THE HOUSE WHEN I'M NOT ON THE JOB...
NO, THE SCARIEST POSSIBILITY OF THEM ALL IS...
...BEING FORCED TO TAKE DAYS OFF!

AH... SORRY ABOUT THIS. I WANTED TO ASK YOU...
PURURU (TREMBLE)
...SO WHAT DID YOU WANT TO DISCUSS ...?
I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD KEEP IT BRIEF.

.....
THE SECOND ROYAL ORDER IS ACTUALLY IN CHARGE OF PROTECTING IMPORTANT PEOPLE.
WHAT ELSE COULD BE THE MATTER?
...ABOUT PRINCE YURIUS.

...WHAT ABOUT HIS HIGH-NESS?

MOST OF THEIR WORK INVOLVES THE ROYAL FAMILY...
...WHICH CAN EVEN AFFECT OUR JOBS AT TIMES...

I'M LEAVING.
UNTIL NEXT TIME.
GACHA (KACHAK)
ガチャ
KU (CLENCH)
IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN FIX THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS HIGHNESS AND HER HOLINESS!?
THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT GUY?
WONDER WHAT BUSINESS HE HAS SO CLOSE TO THE TRAINING GROUNDS.
HM?
...KON... KON...OU?
HIS NAME... WHAT WAS IT AGAIN ...?

WHAT ABOUT SEIICHI-ROU?
BIBI (FLINCH) びびっ…
WELL? WHY ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT SEIICHIROU?
A-ARESH... DON'T SNEAK UP ON ME LIKE THAT...
I DIDN'T SNEAK UP ON YOU.
YOU JUST SAID HIS NAME.
SEIICHI-ROU?
?
PATAN (SHUT)
AHH... THE MAN FROM THE PARALLEL WORLD...
OH, I JUST...
.....
NOTHING... I WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT THE NEXT EXPEDITION...
...AND WONDERED WHETHER SEIICHIROU WAS COMING TOO.

I WON'T EVER LET HIM GO THERE AGAIN.
IN REALITY, HE'S SOMEONE WITH A WEAK CONSTITUTION WHO SHOULDN'T BE TAKEN TO THE DEMON FOREST.
HE CAME LAST TIME BECAUSE HE WAS FORCED TO BY HIS HIGHER-UPS, AND HE NEEDED TO START LOOKING INTO THE MIASMA CONTAINMENT PROJECT.
I WAS SENT SOME DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE EXPEDITION.
AH, THAT REMINDS ME.
SO DOES THAT MEAN HE'S ARESH'S CHARGE?
KURU (WHIRL) <3.
FINE.
CAN YOU LOOK OVER THEM TOO? THEY'RE IN YOUR OFFICE.

ONLY I NEED TO CALL HIM "SEIICHIROU."
HIS FAMILY NAME IS "KONDOU."
USE THAT IF YOU NEED TO ADDRESS HIM.

NOW I'M CERTAIN...
HAAH...
THIS IS MORE THAN JUST PROTECTIVENESS.
HE PUTS KONDOU FIRST AT ALL TIMES...
...AND EVEN STARTED LIVING WITH HIM.
ARESH'S FIRST LOVE...
...IS MOST DEFINITELY KONDOU, THE MAN FROM THE PARALLEL WORLD.

I'M JUST... NO, I GUESS I AM.
YOU SEEM TIRED TODAY.
DESPITE EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN THE PALACE TODAY...
...GATHERING CHURCH DOCUMENTS IS GOING WELL.
Chapter 26
CHURCH ...
NOBLES ...
.....
Oo
THE PROBLEM IS THAT I KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT THE POLITICAL POSITIONS OF THE CHURCH AND ARISTOCRACY.
...SO I'M HOPING TO FINISH UP BEFORE THEN...
THE BISHOP AND ACCOUNTANT SHOULD BE BACK FROM THEIR TRIP SOON...

NOBLES SHOULD COME FROM HONORABLE FAMILIES, BUT...
...THAT PRIEST NEVER GAVE ME HIS FAMILY NAME.
DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT, MILAN-SAN?
DO NOBLES SEVER TIES WITH THEIR FAMILIES WHEN THEY ENTER THE CHURCH?
IT DEPENDS.
NOBLES MAY NOT SUPPORT OTHER FAMILIES ONCE THEY'VE JOINED THE CHURCH...
...BUT SOME STILL RECEIVE AID FROM THEIR OWN FAMILIES.
CHILDREN FROM GOOD FAMILIES...
...MAY ALSO BE TEMPORARILY LEFT IN THE CARE OF THE CHURCH TO STUDY MANNERS.

KON (KNOCK)
KON
KON
PARDON ME.
SO IT WOULD BE INCORRECT TO SAY ALL TIES ARE COMPLETELY SEVERED.
.....
MASTER HAS RETURNED.
WOULD YOU JOIN US IN GREETING HIM?
STILL, HE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY EARLY TODAY.
...IF I WAS JUST A LITTLE LATER GETTING HOME!
WE WOULD HAVE CROSSED PATHS...
THAT WAS CLOSE ...!

VALTOM-SAN HAS BEEN ARESH-SAMA'S BUTLER SINCE HE WAS LITTLE.
HE'S LIKE A FATHER TO ARESH-SAMA AND IS THE ONE PERSON WHO CAN REASON WITH HIM.
IF THAT MAN WANTS ME TO GREET ARESH-SAMA WITH THEM...
...NO... I'LL IGNORE THAT THOUGHT.
I'M NOT BRAVE ENOUGH TO ASK WHAT...
...THE SERVANTS IN THIS HOUSE THINK OF ME.

WELCOME HOME, ARESH-SAMA.
...WHAT ARE YOU PLOTTING?
THAT'S VERY PESSIMISTIC OF YOU.
I CAN GREET THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IF I WANT.
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU THINK OF ME?
THAT YOU'RE AN EXTREME WORK ADDICT.
GUESS I WON'T COME OUT HERE NEXT TIME.

SASA (SCOOT)
さ。
AH!!
……
……
DO YOU WANT TO SEE DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE NEXT EXPEDITION?
GURUN (WHIRL)
I DO!

IT WOULD MAKE THE EXPEDITION COSTS MUCH LOWER, THOUGH...

...MY PROPOSAL TO HAVE SORCERERS AND ARCHITECTS ON STANDBY AT THE NEAREST VILLAGE WASN'T APPROVED ...?

THE PLAN IS FOR THE PURIFICATION TO BE COMPLETED ON THE NEXT EXPEDITION, BUT...

WE ALSO NEED TO CONFIRM THAT THE PURIFICATION ACTUALLY WORKED.

BESIDES, THERE AREN'T ENOUGH SORCERERS TO APPLY THE BARRIER ANYWAY.

THE PLAN ISN'T SET IN STONE.

I AMENDED AND INCREASED THE BUDGET FOR THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT, BUT IT'S A STRUGGLE TO GATHER PERSONNEL FOR THEM.

DO I HAVE THAT RIGHT?

SO THE BARRIER ITSELF WILL REQUIRE A REWORKING OF THE EXPEDITION.

YOU NEED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MAGICAL ENERGY TO JOIN THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT.
ARE THERE REALLY SO FEW PEOPLE WHO MEET THE REQUIREMENT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S ALSO BETTER IF THEY HAVE HIGH MAGICULE RESISTANCE, SINCE THEY'LL BE WORKING IN THE DEMON FOREST.
IN OTHER WORDS, EVERY APPLICANT IS TOO DIFFERENT.
MEETING BOTH OF THOSE CONDITIONS WOULD MAKE YOU CLOSE TO SUPERHUMAN.
MEMBERS OF THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER ARE STRONG PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. WE HAVE GREAT CONTROL OVER OUR OWN MAGIC TOO.
THERE'S NO USE IN HAVING MAGICAL ENERGY IF YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT, AFTER ALL.
DOES THAT MEAN... MAGICAL ENERGY CAN GET OUT OF CONTROL?
YES.

MOST CHILDREN STRUGGLING WITH THAT PROBLEM ARE LEFT IN THE CARE OF THE CHURCH.
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, THE ENTIRETY OF THE CHURCH WAS COVERED IN BARRIERS.
IT'S A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN WITH NO FAMILY, NOBLES, AND COMMONERS WORK ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER.
I GUESS... IT'S A GATHERING PLACE FOR THOSE WITH STRONG MAGICAL ENERGY AND MAGICULE RESISTANCE, REGARDLESS OF STATUS.
PASA (PLOP)
ひょ!...

FUWA (FWOOSH)
WAIT... ARESH-SAMA!
I'M APPLYING A BARRIER.
CHU (KISS)
...!

GUI (YANK)
NO.
HUH?
LOOK AT ME.
AH...HE WANTS TO ACCLIMATE MY BODY AGAIN...

すとん
SUTON (SIT)
ARESH-SAMA! I'M TOO HEAVY!
NO YOU'RE NOT.
BUT...!
IT'S FINE. SETTLE DOWN.
PUT ME D—
...!

MM
...
SEIICHIROU.
DOKI
(BADUMP)

POSU (FWUMP)
ぽす…
OH... NO...
.....
HUH?
YOU DON'T WANT TO SIT ON MY LAP, RIGHT?
HUH?
IS THIS OKAY?
AREN'T YOU FINISHED ALREADY?
WAIT... WHY ARE YOU ON TOP OF ME?
YOU'RE CHECKING MY BODY!?
WHAT!?
YOU'VE GAINED A LITTLE WEIGHT.
GOOD

PAN (SLAP)
はぁ
I HAVE TO STAY FOCUSED...
THE NEXT PURIFICATION EXPEDITION IS IN SIX DAYS.
HE'S A QUICK LEARNER AND HAS SHARP INTUITION.
AS THE STAR CAPTAIN OF A ROYAL ORDER, ARESH-SAMA DOESN'T LACK INTELLIGENCE.
WOKE UP IN HIS ARMS AGAIN THIS MORNING
JUST FORGET IT!
FORGET IT!
PAN
PA PA PA はは はん
PA (SMACK) PA PA PA PA はは はは はは

...BECAUSE HE KNOWS I HATE WASTEFULNESS AND ALWAYS TRY TO BRING ABOUT THE BEST RESULTS.
HOWEVER, I THINK HE'S INTENTIONALLY TARGETING MY STRONG ABILITY TO ADAPT...
I'M NOT JUST GIVING IN TO WHATEVER HAPPENS IN THE MOMENT.
...WHAT A TROUBLE-SOME MAN...
STILL, THIS IS SOMETHING THAT CAN'T BE DECIDED ON EFFICIENCY ALONE.

...I'M THE WRONG PERSON TO GO TO FOR LOVE ADVICE.
I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN ABLE TO TAKE AN HONEST LOOK AT MYSELF YET...
CHIRA (GLANCE) ちら…
KOTSU (CLACK) コツ

THE ONES LEFT IN THE CHURCH'S CARE ...?
A FEW OF THESE ROOMS ARE EXTRA FANCY.
THEY'RE PROBABLY FOR NOBLE CHILDREN...
GOOD MORNING, SELIO-SAN.
YOU SEEM AS BUSY AS EVER.
TCH...! YOU'RE HERE AGAIN? TALK ABOUT ANNOYING!
NASTY~
MUST BE NICE TO WORK FOR THE PALACE AND GET TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT...
YEAH, I AM!
YOU'RE THE REASON I CAN'T GET MY WORK DONE EITHER!
HA-HA-HA!
YES, IT REALLY IS (DEADPAN).

...AND CONSIDERING THE POWER BALANCE ISSUE WITHIN THE CASTLE ITSELF, I CAN'T RELY ON THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER FOR MUCH ELSE.
THERE'S NO PROOF THAT THE NEXT PURIFICATION EXPEDITION WILL BE THE LAST ONE...
THE MOST PRESSING ISSUE IS SELECTING PERSONNEL AND MANAGERS TO CREATE THE BARRIER.
IT'S, CURRENTLY IMPOSSIBLE TO BRING ON ENOUGH MANPOWER.
HOWEVER, THEY BOTH COME WITH THEIR OWN UNIQUE PROBLEMS.
...A ROUND-ABOUT WAY OF TELLING ME TO GET INVOLVED WITH THINGS OUTSIDE OF THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER.
MY ASSIGNMENT HERE AT THE CHURCH IS...
THEY MUST ALSO BECOME WELL-VERSED IN MANNERS AND ETIQUETTE...
...AS WELL AS BE LITERATE, OR ELSE IT WON'T BE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO DO THE JOB.
NOBLES AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN WORK AT THE PALACE...
...BUT DEALING WITH MAGIC REQUIRES BASIC EDUCATION.

I WANT TO SECURE AT LEAST SIX PEOPLE TO TAKE TURNS MAINTAINING THE BARRIER...
...BUT THERE'S A HUGE DEMAND IN EVERY SECTOR FOR POWERFUL SORCERERS.
WE CAN'T POACH THEM ALL FROM THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT...
THEY EITHER HAVE TO DISCOVER THEIR POTENTIAL FOR MAGIC AT A YOUNG AGE...
GATAN (RATTLE)
ガタン…
...WHICH MEANS WE HAVE TO RECRUIT NEW PERSONNEL.
MAYBE I SHOULD GET THE PRIME MINISTER'S THOUGHTS ON THIS.
...OR COME FROM A FAMILY WEALTHY ENOUGH TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO A SCHOOL FOR MAGIC.
SEEMS HE'S KEEPING AN EYE ON ME TODAY.
HEY, SELIO!
BIKU (JOLT)
びくっ
NATURALLY, ALL THESE REQUIREMENTS MEAN FEWER CANDIDATES.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WHY AREN'T YOU HELPING IN THE ALMS-HOUSE?
I...
BUT I... HAVE TO WATCH THIS GUY TODAY, SO I ASKED TO TRADE SHIFTS...
ぴく...
PIKU (TWITCH)
LEAVE THIS MAN BE.
HE'S JUST THE TAGALONG OUTSIDER. HE CAN'T DO ANYTHING HIMSELF.
GU (JAB)
!!
BESIDES, THE ALMSHOUSE IS YOUR GUYS' JOB, RIGHT?
DON'T JUST HAND IT OFF TO ME.
O... OKAY ...

.....
BATAN (SLAM)
DON'T DO ANYTHING YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO, YOU COMMONER OUTSIDER.
SO...
...THAT'S WHY YOU CAME HERE?
AH, IN THAT CASE...
I'LL CALL FOR SELIO, SO PLEASE RETURN TO THE OTHER ROOM.
GOOD-NESS... WHAT AM I TO DO WITH THEM?
HAAH...
YES.
DOCUMENT STORAGE & LIBRARY

...FOR WHAT REASON?
POSU (SLIP)
I WANT TO INSPECT THE ALMSHOUSE, SINCE IT FALLS UNDER CHURCH DOMAIN.
I'VE ONLY SEEN IT FROM AFAR, SO THIS IS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY.
...PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU TO THE ALMSHOUSE.
BESIDES, IF I GO THERE...
...SELIO-SAN CAN STILL HELP OUT AT THE ALMSHOUSE WHILE FULFILLING HIS DUTY OF GUIDING ME.
IT'S MORE EFFICIENT THAT WAY, ISN'T IT?

SO THIS IS THE ALMS-HOUSE ...
Chapter 27

ACCORDING TO THESE DOCUMENTS, IT CURRENTLY HOUSES TWENTY-EIGHT CHILDREN. IS THAT CORRECT?
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT...?
FROM THE REFERENCE ROOM I VISITED ON MY FIRST DAY.

...ARE YOU AS SHAMELESS AS YOU ARE BECAUSE YOU'RE A PALACE OFFICIAL?
OR IS THAT JUST YOUR NATURAL PERSON-ALITY?
THE LATTER, I BELIEVE.

THEY ALSO LEAVE BY A CERTAIN AGE, RIGHT?
.....
...YES.
HAH...
THEY STAY AT THE ALMSHOUSE UNTIL THE AGE OF TWELVE...
...AT WHICH POINT THEY EITHER ENTER TRAINING TO BECOME MONKS...
...OR TAKE JOBS IN TOWN.
WHAT SORTS OF JOBS...?
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT ...
...YOU SHOULD CONDUCT YOURSELF IN A MANNER FITTING FOR A DISCIPLE OF THE GOD ABRAN...
I'M NO DISCIPLE.
WHERE DO THESE CHILDREN WITHOUT FAMILIES END UP WORKING?

CRAFTS-MEN?
THEY DON'T TAKE JOBS THAT MAKE USE OF THEIR MAGICAL ENERGY?
MOST OF THEM END UP AS APPRENTICE CRAFTSMEN.
WITH ENOUGH TRAINING IN THEIR ART, THEY CAN TO MAKE A DECENT LIVING.
I DON'T KNOW FROM WHENCE THAT IDEA CAME, BUT...
ZOKU (SHUDDER)
...MANY CHILDREN ARE SENT HERE BY THEIR FAMILIES BECAUSE THEY CAN'T CONTROL THEIR MAGICAL ENERGY.
WE TEACH THEM VARIOUS METHODS TO CONTROL IT...
...SO THEY CAN ACHIEVE NORMAL LIVES.

THEY SEND THEM TO THE CHURCH TO PREVENT THEIR MAGICAL ENERGY FROM RUNNING WILD...?
AS I RECALL, ARESH-SAMA SAID SOME-THING SIMILAR.
...!
.....
I CAN FEEL THE SURGES OF HIS MAGICAL ENERGY EVEN THROUGH MY BARRIER.
I SHOULDN'T INQUIRE INTO THIS TOPIC ANY FURTHER.

(STOMP) TA TA TA TA TA...
YOU!
WHY'D YOU COME ALL THIS WAY!?
YOU SHOULD ASK SELIO—
THEN WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT SORTS OF JOBS ARE CARRIED OUT AT THE ALMSHOUSE?
I THOUGHT YOU COULD CARRY OUT YOUR WORK HERE...
...WHILE YOU GUIDED AND MONITORED ME AT THE SAME TIME...

GOOD-NESS...
COME SPEAK WITH ME IF THIS HAPPENS AGAIN.

SELIO.
DID FREDRIK ASK YOU TO DO THIS?
I-I'M SORRY.

IT SEEMED LIKE A DAILY OCCURRENCE FROM WHAT I SAW.
TATTLING TO THE PRIEST ABOUT IT WOULD ONLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE.
I DOUBT THAT WILL HAPPEN.
OKAY ...
PLEASE DON'T FORGET THAT YOU ARE A DISCIPLE.
I'LL BE RETURNING TO THE CHURCH NOW... ...SO I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD KEEP YOUR CONDUCT IN CHECK.
WHY'D YOU COME TO THE ALMS-HOUSE ...?
WHY WOULD A PALACE OFFICIAL EVER WANNA COME TO THIS PLACE...?
HE'S NOT GOING TO LET THAT GO...?

OH! IT'S KONDOU-SAN!
SO YOU REALLY ARE WORKING AT THE CHURCH.
YES, AS I SAID BEFORE.
BUT I LOOKED ALL OVER AND COULDN'T FIND YOU!
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?
...IS THAT SO?
YES!
IT'S HER HOLINESS!
HER HOLINESS...
I'VE BEEN HELPING OUT IN THE ALMSHOUSE LATELY TOO.
JUST AN INSPEC-TION...
WHAT DO YOU DO HERE, SHIRAISHI-SAN?

IT'S A JOB THAT DOESN'T HAVE TO DO WITH BEING THE HOLY MAIDEN?
STILL, SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PURIFY PEOPLE...
AH... BUT THIS ALMS-HOUSE—
U-UM!
DON'T YOU TWO...
...HATE EACH OTHER...?

EACH OTHER ?
HATE ...?
WHY WOULD THAT MAKE KONDOU-SAN AND ME HATE EACH OTHER?
?
IS HE TALKING ABOUT MY PLAN TO ELIMINATE THE SYSTEM OF HOLY MAIDEN SUMMONINGS?
I-I MEAN... THIS GUY CAST A SHADOW ON YOUR HOLINESS'S STRENGTH...
AHH! THAT'S TRUE!
WHY...? HE'S REMOVING THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY MAIDEN...
HE'S MADE ME REALLY HAPPY!
ONCE IT'S GONE, I CAN GO BACK TO MY HOME WORLD.

I THOUGHT IT WAS ODD FOR THEM TO ANTAGONIZE A PALACE OFFICIAL.
SO THIS IS WHY THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH ARE HOSTILE TOWARD ME.
NOW I GET IT.
HFSSSH...
AH... HE FROZE COM-PLETELY.
GARA GARA GARA (CRUMBLE)
ガラガラガラ…
SHIRAI-SHI-SAN.
EVEN IF THE BARRIER IS FINISHED, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE WE'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN RIGHT AWAY.
I KNOW.
THEY HAVE TO COMPLETE THE SPELL THAT WILL ALLOW US TO RETURN FIRST.
VOID
ぼわぁん BOWAAN (BWOMM)
DEDICATION!!
ONCE I'M DONE PURIFYING, I'LL HELP OUT TOO!
HUFF...
THERE'S THAT DÉJÀ VU AGAIN!

...I KEPT COMING TO THE ALMSHOUSE TO CHECK ON THEM, BUT...
AFTER MEETING THE CHILDREN WHO CAME TO THE CHAPEL WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO GO...
...PAR-DON?
...IT TURNS OUT...
...THESE CHILDREN AREN'T EDUCATED IN THE SLIGHTEST!
PIKU (TWITCH)
YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING, WEREN'T YOU?
AH! THAT'S RIGHT.
...BUT EVEN SO, THEY'RE STILL "KIDS"!
THE BIGGER KIDS HAVE TO LOOK AFTER THE LITTLE ONES...
IT'S COMMUNAL LIVING WHERE THEY DO ALL THE CHORES THEM-SELVES.
THEY'RE NOT ALLOWED TO GO TO SCHOOL, AND THEY HELP OUT HERE EVERY DAY.
UM... SHIRAI-SHI-SAN...
THEY AREN'T BEING PREPARED FOR THEIR FUTURES IN ANY WAY!

I KNOW THAT NOT EVERYONE CAN ATTEND SCHOOL.
BUT IT'S TOO PITIFUL FOR THEM TO LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY...
...WHEN THEY ALREADY HAVE NO PARENTS OR RELATIVES.
BUT...I DO UNDERSTAND ONE PART OF WHAT SHE SAYS.
THIS IS A PARALLEL WORLD. THERE'S NO USE COMPARING IT TO MODERN JAPAN.
MOST OF ALL, THEY HAVE NO FREEDOM IN THEIR CHOICE OF OCCUPATION.
IT'S A NET LOSS FOR THE COUNTRY TO MISS OUT ON TALENT AND POTENTIAL BECAUSE OF A CHILD'S UPBRINGING OR THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR BIRTH.
SIGMA-KUN IS VERY TALENTED TOO, AND THE CHILDREN IN THE ALMSHOUSE CAN'T USE THEIR MAGICAL ENERGY.
THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE I COULD HELP...
YOU'RE A VERY KIND PERSON, YOUR HOLINESS.

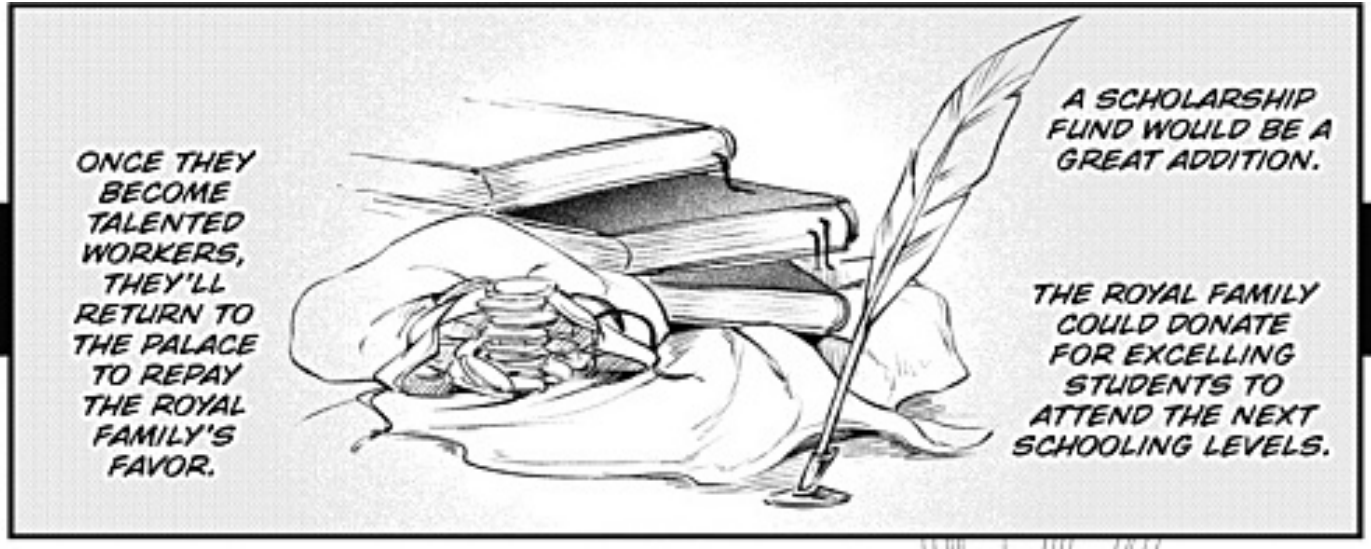
WE'RE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN JUST TO GET BY.
THE ALMSHOUSE DOESN'T HAVE THAT KIND OF TIME OR MONEY TO SPARE.
...IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD.
BUT...
THAT'S ...!
...DIDN'T YOU EVER HAVE A DREAM JOB WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER?
BUT, SELIO-KUN...
"I WANT TO BE A KNIGHT SOMEDAY."
"WHEN I GROW UP, I WANT TO BE A SORCERER IN THE CASTLE."
YOU SEE... THE LITTLE KIDS HERE ALWAYS SAY THE SAME THINGS.

BUT THE KIDS HERE CAN'T EVEN SAY THOSE THINGS HONESTLY.
I JUST DON'T THINK IT'S RIGHT.
YOU MUST HAVE COME FROM A VERY PEACEFUL WORLD, YOUR HOLINESS.
...MY WORLD HAD THINGS LIKE WAR AND DISCRIMI-NATION TOO.
WE EVEN HAD ALMS-HOUSES.
BUT...
...WE STILL HAD THE FREEDOM TO ACHIEVE OUR DREAMS.
WE COULD STUDY AND WORK HARD IN ORDER TO MAKE THOSE DREAMS A REALITY.
THAT'S WHAT I WANT FOR THE CHILDREN HERE TOO.
—BLE.

IT'S NOT A BAD IDEA TO CONSIDER.
THAT'S ...
...NOT POSSI-BLE!
...HUH?
...IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO OPEN SMALL, PRIVATE SCHOOLS.
TON (TAP)
ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXPAND EDUCATION AS A WHOLE...
...AND PARISHIONERS WOULD INCREASE AS THE CHURCH EARNED THE TRUST OF THE TOWNSFOLK.
IF THESE SCHOOLS WERE SET UP INSIDE THE CHURCH, IT WOULD CATCH ON IN OTHER CITIES...

Y-YOUR HOLINESS!
WOW! THEY'D BE OPEN-AIR CLASSES!
WHAT THE HECK!?
IT WOULD NEVER GO SO PERFECTLY IN REAL LIFE...
...THE CHURCH MIGHT RECEIVE MORE ASSISTANCE ONCE THE TOWNSPEOPLE BECOME MORE INVOLVED WITH THEM.
ALSO, AND THIS MAY JUST BE WISHFUL THINKING, BUT...
BESIDES, WE HAVE OUR OWN JOBS TO DO!
YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO GET ENOUGH MATERIALS FOR THEM!
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN THE ALMSHOUSE ALONE!?
1 2 3
2 3 1
3 1 2
...WHERE GROUP ONE TAKES CLASSES ON FIRE DAY...
...AND GROUPS TWO AND THREE WORK.
SARA (SWISH)
SARA
SARA
YOU COULD GET THE NUMBERS DOWN BY SHARING TEACHING MATERIALS AND ATTENDING CLASSES IN SHIFTS.
A SHIFT SCHEDULE...?
KURU (FLIP) <3
YOU WOULD SPLIT THE CHILDREN AT THE ALMSHOUSE INTO THREE GROUPS LIKE SO...
THEN GROUP TWO TAKES CLASSES ON THE NEXT WATER DAY...
...AND GROUPS ONE AND THREE WORK.

AS FOR THE MATERIALS, I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO TEACH MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLE READING, WRITING, AND ARITH-METIC.
WAIT... BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH FOR MOST JOBS...
IT SHOULD FUNCTION DECENTLY THAT WAY.
.....
THERE'S NO NEED TO RUSH STRAIGHT THROUGH EVERYTHING.
YOU'LL BE A VALUABLE WORKER IN TOWN IF YOU GET JUST THE BASICS DOWN. IT'LL BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS...
...AND IF YOU DO FIND YOUR OWN TALENTS, YOU CAN GO TO A REAL SCHOOL AND STUDY THERE.
GYU (SQUEEZE)
...YOU...


ONCE THEY BECOME TALENTED WORKERS, THEY'LL RETURN TO THE PALACE TO REPAY THE ROYAL FAMILY'S FAVOR.
A SCHOLARSHIP FUND WOULD BE A GREAT ADDITION.
THE ROYAL FAMILY COULD DONATE FOR EXCELLING STUDENTS TO ATTEND THE NEXT SCHOOLING LEVELS.

HANG ON! YOU CAN'T JUST...
ONCE THE KIDS ARE SPLIT INTO DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS, WE NEED ONLY LAY THE GROUNDWORK AT THE PALACE.

HUH!?
NOW THAT IT'S DECIDED, LET'S SEE WHAT THE KIDS AT THE ALMSHOUSE THINK.

HURRY, NOW. THERE'S MUCH TO DO.
PON (PAT)
LET'S GO, SELIO-SAN.

I REALLY...
...HATE YOU!
I...

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, SEIICHIROU.
I'M MOST GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE IN EXCELLENT HEALTH, PRIME MINISTER KARVADA.
MAY I GET RIGHT TO MY REPORT?
I'LL START WITH THE CHURCH'S FUNDS.
I DON'T HAVE A FULL PICTURE OF THE SITUATION YET...
...SO I APOLOGIZE FOR BEING UNABLE TO REPORT ANY DIRECT NUMBERS.
OH, THAT'S FINE.
THE BISHOP AND THE ACCOUNTANT ARE AWAY RIGHT NOW, AREN'T THEY?
WE'RE FRIENDS, RIGHT?
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SO FORMAL.
THANK YOU.

THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BACK IN TWO DAYS.
STILL, ISN'T IT ACTUALLY BETTER FOR YOU THIS WAY, SEIICHIROU?
THEY ARE.
FOR SOME REASON, THEY LEFT FOR WORK DESPITE KNOWING THERE WOULD BE AN INSPECTION.
I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR OPINION...
...WITH REGARDS TO WHAT YOU'VE SEEN SO FAR.
THAT'S TRUE. IT WAS EASIER TO GATHER THE DOCUMENTS I NEEDED.
ARE THEY EMBEZ-ZLING?
...AS WELL AS THEIR DONATION AMOUNTS, I BELIEVE THERE ARE DISCREPANCIES IN ALL AREAS.
...BASED ON THE RANK AND NUMBER OF NOBLE VISITORS REPORTED BY THE CHURCH...
WHILE I DON'T WANT TO SAY FOR CERTAIN BEFORE I'VE RECEIVED THE MATERIALS...

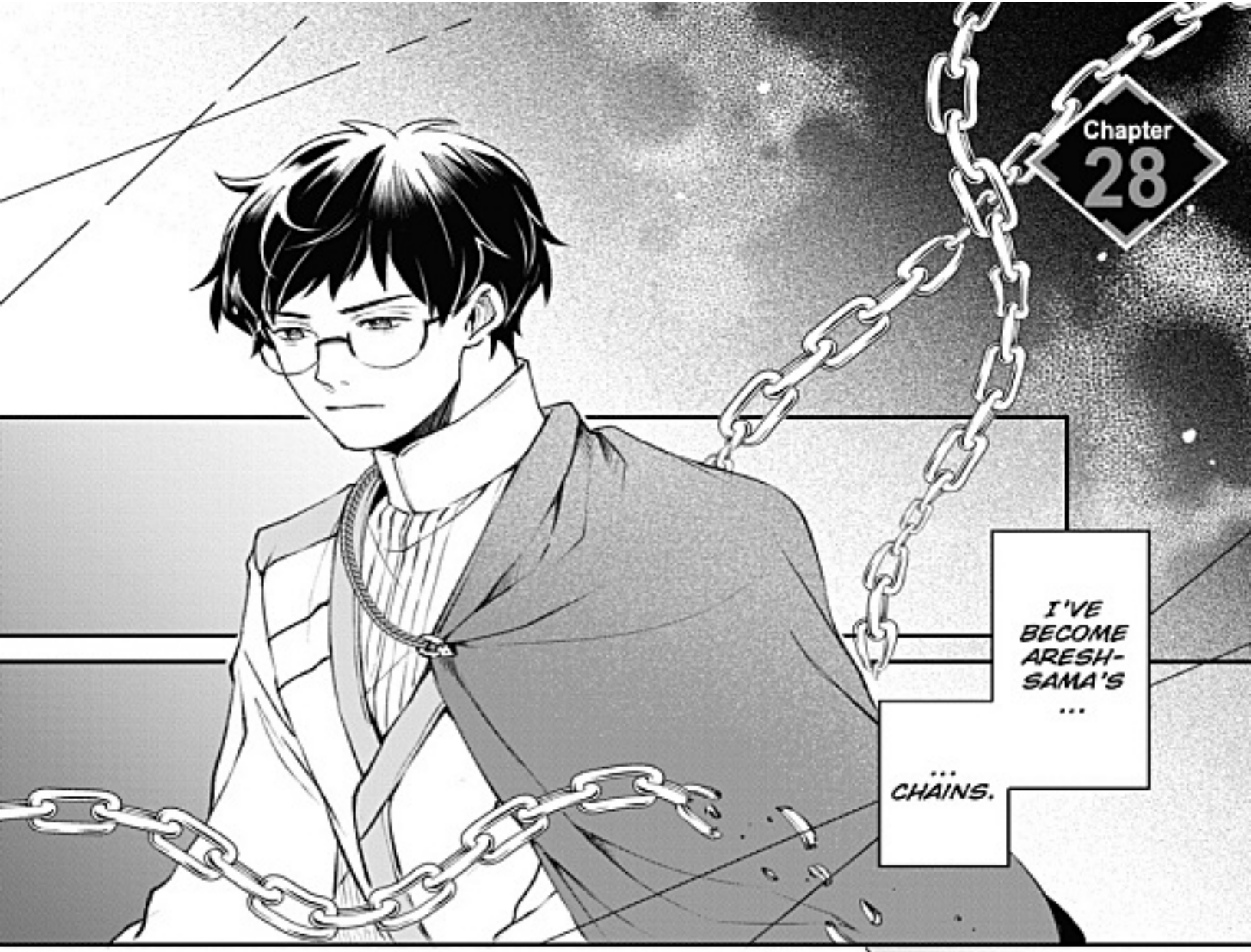
...BUT THE AMOUNT WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO RUN THE CHURCH WITH.
I TRIED CALCULATING THEIR DONATIONS BASED ON THE INFORMATION NOR GAVE ME...
I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, AS I DON'T HAVE A GRASP ON ADMINISTRATION COSTS WITHIN THE CHURCH...
I SEE...
NO... HOW-EVER...
ANY CLUES ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE SPENDING IT ON?
THE PRIEST ... FATHER SIEGVOLD?
PIKU (TWITCH)
...AT THE VERY LEAST, THE ALMSHOUSE, MONKS-IN-TRAINING...
...AND PRIEST HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.
YOU KNOW HIM?
WHY, HE'S FAMOUS.
NOT ONLY DOES HE COME FROM A PRESTIGIOUS FAMILY, BUT HE'S A HANDSOME MAN WHO POSSESSES MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY.
PLUS, IT'S DIFFICULT FOR NOBLES TO GET CLOSE TO HIM, CONSIDERING HIS DEVOUT FAITH.

YES... YOU DIDN'T HAVE MAGIC IN YOUR HOMELAND, DID YOU, SEIICHIROU?
... MAGICAL ENERGY... YOU SAY?
SO THERE'S A HIGH DEMAND FOR MAGICAL ENERGY, EVEN AMONG NOBLES?
NOW I'M EVEN MORE CONFUSED ABOUT WHY THE CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH END UP WHERE THEY DO.
MAGICAL ENERGY IS A POWERFUL SUBSTANCE USED IN SPELLS AND MAGIC TOOLS, BUT IT'S ALSO DIFFICULT TO MANAGE.
IT REQUIRES SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY.
A DANGEROUS ENERGY SOURCE... LIKE NUCLEAR POWER?
...LEARN HOW TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY THEY POSSESS AT THE CHURCH.
THAT'S WHY CHILDREN BORN WITH TOO MUCH OF IT...

YES, THANKFULLY, IT'S GETTING BETTER WITH TIME.
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
THAT REMINDS ME.
ARE YOU GAINING ANY RESISTANCE TO SPELLS AND MAGICULES YET?
KACHA (CLINK)
カチ…
BUT FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD...
...YOU'VE MANAGED TO TAKE THE REINS OF A MAN AS FAMOUSLY DIFFICULT AS FATHER SIEGVOLD.
YOUR EXCEL-LENCY ...
I SUPPOSE HE'S MORE OF A BEAST THAN A HORSE.
THAT WOULD MAKE YOU HIS CHAINS, NOT HIS REINS.
TAKE HIS REINS ...?
YOU MAKE HIM SOUND LIKE A HORSE...

THAT WASN'T A JOKE.
HOWEVER YOU MAY FEEL ABOUT HIM...
...YOU'VE BECOME HIS "CHAINS."

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO SUPPORT THE CHOICES YOU MAKE...
...BUT I SUGGEST YOU BE VERY CAREFUL.
UNLIKE FATHER SIEG-VOLD'S CHAINS...
...YOU EXIST HERE IN REAL LIFE. YOU CAN BE TOUCHED.
YOU'RE EVEN FRAGILE, AT THAT.
...I APPRECIATE YOUR CONSIDERA-TION.
GYU CCLENCHD


Chapter
28
I'VE BECOME ARESH-SAMA'S ...
... CHAINS.

IT'S NOT JUST HIS EXCELLENCY.
MANY PEOPLE AROUND US HAVE NOTICED ARESH-SAMA'S ATTACHMENT TO ME.

KACHA (CLINK)

SENDING ME TO THE CHURCH...
...WAS A TEST TO DISCOVER WHETHER I COULD WORK WITHOUT ARESH-SAMA...
FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, YOU'VE AN INTEREST IN...
...OPENING A PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR COMMONERS IN THE CHURCH?
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT WOULD BE FOR THE CHILDREN WHO HAVE NO RELATIVES ...
...WHERE THEY CAN LEARN READING, WRITING, AND MATH FOR FREE.
GAINING MORE SKILLS OPENS A WIDER RANGE OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES.
PLUS, CRIME WILL BE REDUCED AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING AMONG COMMONERS WILL BE ELEVATED.
THE MOST TALENTED PERSONNEL COULD BE SENT TO SCHOOL USING NATIONAL FUNDS.
THIS WILL INCREASE PARISHIONERS AND GOODWILL TOWARD THE CHURCH AS WELL.
I BELIEVE NOBLES WHO DONATE MONEY TO THE SCHOOLS WILL ALSO SEE A BOOST TO THEIR PUBLIC IMAGES...

IF EVERYTHING WORKS OUT, THE TOWNSPEOPLE MAY START SUPPORTING THE CHURCH'S WORK TOO.
YOU REALLY ARE INCREDIBLE.
YOU EVEN HAVE THINGS TO SAY ABOUT EDUCATION NOW?
I DON'T MEAN TO SPEAK OUT OF LINE.
IT WAS HER HOLINESS WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE...
...AND I DID NOTHING MORE THAN ADD TO HER PROPOSAL.
HER HOLINESS, YOU SAY...?

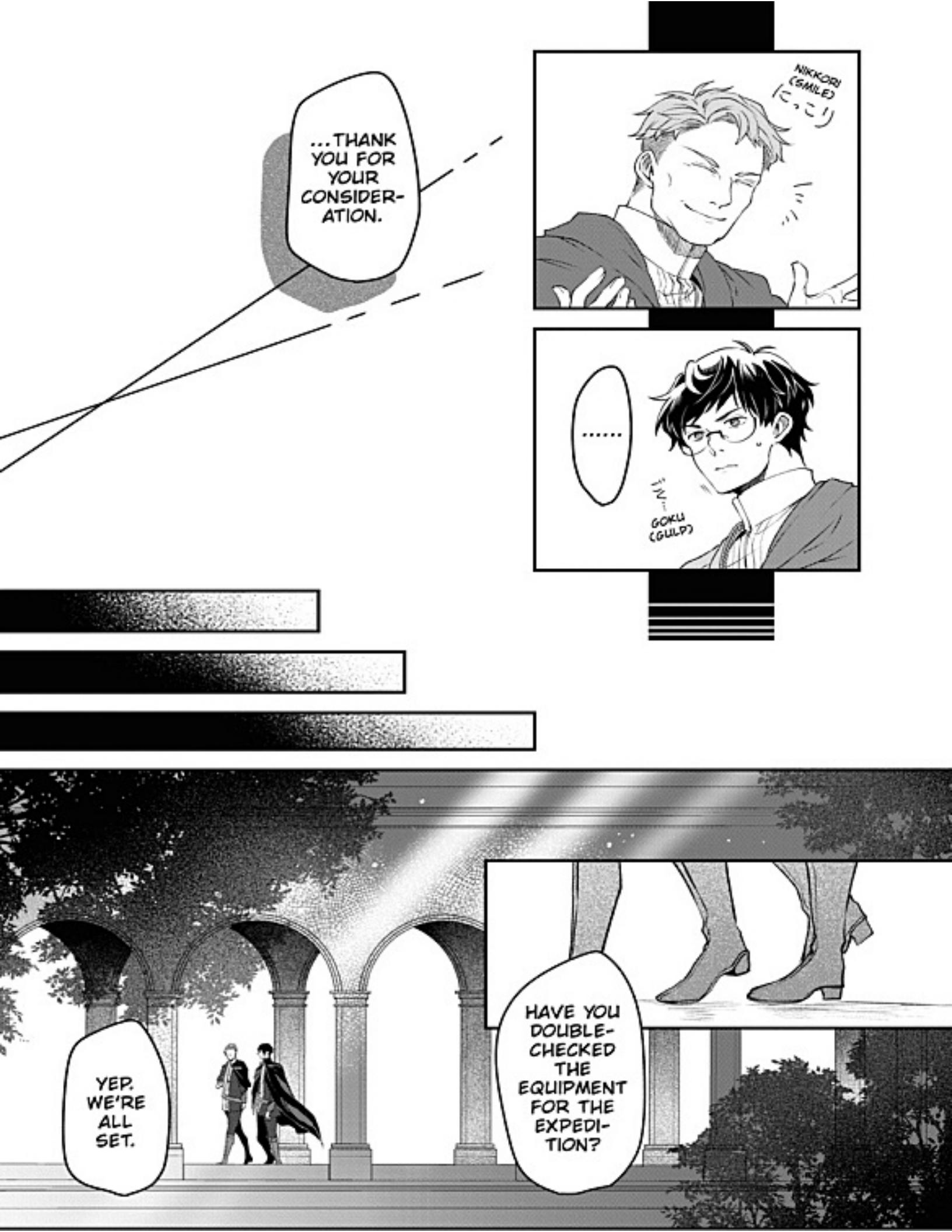
I'M CURRENTLY WORKING ON A PRELIMINARY CALCULATION OF THE SCHOOL'S ECONOMIC EFFECTS.
SHE MUST HAVE COME UP WITH IT AFTER SEEING ALL THE KIDS IN THE ALMS-HOUSE.
SOME NOBLE CHILDREN ARE THE SAME.
I'LL SUBMIT IT WITHIN A FEW DAYS, SO I HOPE YOU'LL LOOK IT OVER.
SURE. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE.
...THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU.
YES?
SEIICHI-ROU.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT TO DO TO THIS COUNTRY?
KACHA (CLINK)
ふん…

I HAVE NO ATTACHMENT TO THIS KINGDOM.
ALL I'M DOING IS MAKING IT EASIER FOR ME TO DO MY JOB.
NOTHING.
THERE'S A SEVERE LACK OF PERSONNEL IN THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT...
...AND THEY'LL FALL BEHIND BETWEEN THEIR WORK ON THE MIASMA COUNTERMEASURES AND RETURN MAGIC DEVELOPMENT.
I WANT THEM TO BE ABLE TO RECRUIT WORKERS FROM A WIDER POOL...
DESPITE COMMONERS BEING ALLOWED TO WORK IN THE PALACE...
...THEY STILL NEED AT LEAST SOME LEVEL OF SCHOOLING.
HEH HEH HEH ...

HA-HA... YOU REALLY...
HEH HEH...
MU (MIFFED) むっ...
THE KINGDOM WILL MISS OUT IF THEY IGNORE POTENTIAL WORKERS.
FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE HIGHER EDUCATION...
...OF ONE HUNDRED COMMONERS WAS PAID FOR BY THE GOVERNMENT...
...JUST ONE OF THOSE STUDENTS ENDING UP AS A SUCCESSFUL MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT...
...WOULD BE ENOUGH TO OFFSET THE COSTS OF THE OTHER NINETY-NINE.
IT'S A WASTE FOR THE KINGDOM TO NOT TAKE ON SUCH A COST-EFFECTIVE PLAN.
PEOPLE ARE AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE TOO.
MAYBE I ONLY THINK THAT WAY BECAUSE MY CORPORATE DRONE NATURE IS SO DEEPLY INGRAINED.

I AGREE THAT THE COUNTRY CAN'T FUNCTION WITHOUT PEOPLE.
IT'S A DETRIMENT TO THE KINGDOM TO NOT USE ITS PEOPLE EFFEC-TIVELY.
AH... HOW SAD.
IT'S REALLY SUCH A WASTE, SEIICHI-ROU.
IS MY PLAN LACKING IN SOME WAY?
NOT THAT.
IF THAT DARK BEAST WASN'T AROUND...
...I WOULD HAVE TAKEN YOU IN MYSELF.


...THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDER-ATION.
NIKKORI (SMILE)
(にっこり)
.....
GOKU (GULP)
HAVE YOU DOUBLE-CHECKED THE EQUIPMENT FOR THE EXPEDI-TION?
YEP. WE'RE ALL SET.

THE EXPEDITION'S TWO DAYS AWAY NOW. I HOPE WE CAN WIPE OUT THE MIASMA FOR GOOD.
AGREED.
KOTSU (TAK)
KOTSU
THE KNIGHTS ARE GOING OUT DRINKING TONIGHT.
WANNA JOIN US, ARESH?
NO THANKS.
JIII (STARE)
HE GOES RIGHT HOME AFTER WORK...
IT'S ALMOST LIKE THEY'RE NEWLYWEDS!
リ～ンゴ～ン
RIIN-GOOON (RING-RINGING)
NOTHING... JUST THOUGHT YOU'D SAY THAT.
WHAT'S WRONG?
HA HA...

...IT'S HANDY TO KEEP HIM IN THIS STATE, SINCE HE GETS HIS WORK DONE SO QUICKLY.
WELL...
PIKU (TWITCH)
STILL, WHY EXACTLY IS IT THAT ARESH IS SO OBSESSED WITH HIM?
TA (TMP)
ARESH?
AH!

GUI (YANK)
URK!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...
...SEIICHI-ROU?
...ARESH-SAMA...
DON'T TELL ME...
...YOU'RE HERE WORKING ON YOUR DAY OFF?
.....

OF COURSE NOT!
I ONLY CAME HERE TO DELIVER A PROGRESS REPORT TO PRIME MINISTER KARVADA.
OHH?
THEN WHY IS THE BUDGET REPORT FOR THE SECOND ROYAL ORDER IN YOUR HANDS?
CAPTAIN MAKOVSKA JUST GAVE THIS TO ME...
RIGHT?
HUH!?
AH... AH, YES.
I THOUGHT I'D HAND IT OVER, SINCE I HAPPENED TO SEE HIM.
THANK YOU FOR READING THE ROOM!

AH! SEIIII!
I LEFT THE DOCUMENTS YOU ASKED FOR THIS MORNING...
...ON YOUR DESK! CHECK 'EM OVER FOR ME, OKAAAY?
PYON (BOING)
PYON
GUGUGUGUGUGU (GRIND)

I REALLY DID HAVE TO REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER.
WHY WOULDN'T I FINISH UP A JOB OR TWO WHILE I WAS ALREADY AT THE CASTLE?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU BEFORE YOU GET IT?
IS THERE A BRAIN IN THAT HEAD OF YOURS?
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE IN THE FIRST PLACE. DAYS OF REST ARE EXACTLY THAT.
GRRR...
NGH... HE'S NOT WRONG!
IT'S THE THIRD EXPEDITION NOW. MILAN ALREADY FINISHED ALL OF THAT FOR ME.
ガタッ GATA (RATTLE)
THE ROYAL ORDER TAKES CARE OF MOST OF THE PRELIMINARY PREPARATION NOW TOO.
...YOU'RE GOING ON THE PURIFICATION EXPEDITION IN TWO DAYS, AREN'T YOU?
HAVE YOU FINISHED PREPA-RING?
IF ANYONE NEEDS TO PREPARE, IT'S YOU.
WHAT ...?

I WON'T BE AROUND YOU FOR SOME TIME.
YOU'LL NEED A BARRIER TO BE SAFE.
TOMORROW'S MY REST DAY BEFORE I LEAVE... ...SO WE HAVE PLENTY OF TIME.
BUT I HAVE WORK TOMORROW, SO WE'LL HAVE TO BE QUI—
DON'T BE SILLY.
FUWA (WHOOSH)
WHOA!
I'M NEVER GOING TO WASTE... ...A CHANCE TO TOUCH YOU.

YOU'D DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT.

I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT.
GURU (WAVE)
GURU
BUT I'M THE ONE WHO'S GETTING PAID...

HEH-HENH! IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR YOU TO PAY THE PIPER!

YOU MAY BE A FRIEND OF THE HOLY MAIDEN...
...BUT I'LL NEVER APPROVE OF YOU COMING HERE AND THROWING YOUR WEIGHT AROUND!

HOW DARE YOU!?
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN THAT HEAD AFTER ALL.
ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME!?
HEH...
...SO I HOPE YOU START ATTENDING THE SCHOOL ONCE IT'S READY.
AN EMPTY HEAD WILL STRAIN YOUR BODY...

I NEED TO FOCUS.
MY MIND IS STILL FOGGY.
...BUT I ACTUALLY FORGOT ABOUT THEM AFTER LAST NIGHT'S INTENSE ACTIVITIES (WE DIDN'T GO ALL THE WAY).
I'VE BEEN WAITING TO MEET THEM FOR SO LONG...
THE BISHOP AND HEAD ACCOUNTANT HAVE FINALLY RETURNED TODAY.

ARESH-SAMA WILL BE AWAY FOR SEVEN DAYS, INCLUDING AN EXTRA CONTINGENCY DAY.
I NEED TO USE THIS TIME TO FINISH UP WHATEVER I CAN.
SO YOU'RE THE MAN WHO CAME FROM THE SAME WORLD AS THE HOLY MAIDEN?
I'VE HEARD OF YOU.
I AM MATEUS, THE BISHOP HERE IN THE ROYAL CAPITAL.
THIS IS CIPRIANO, THE MAN IN CHARGE OF ACCOUNTING AT OUR CHURCH.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.
AS DO I.

STILL...
...WITH THAT ATTITUDE, IT'S HARD NOT TO SEE THE CHURCH AS AN ENTITY THAT'S HOSTILE TO THE PALACE.
I'M SO SORRY THAT THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS ARE LATE.
STILL, THIS MAN SEEMS FRIENDLY ...
I WAS WRITING THEM UP AROUND THE TIME OF THE HOLY MAIDEN SUMMONING, AND...
...AS EMBARRASSING AS IT IS, I WAS SO BUSY, I ACTUALLY LOST THEM...
I STARTED REDOING THEM, BUT THEN THE HOLY MAIDEN CAME INTO OUR CARE, AND I HAD TO GO ON THE WORK TRIP, SO THEY'RE NOT FINISHED YET.
...I SEE.
HOWEVER, I'LL HAVE THEM BY THE DEADLINE ...
KOTSU (TAK)
REGARDLESS OF THE HOLY MAIDEN'S ARRIVAL...
...THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM LIES WITH YOU, DOES IT NOT?

OF COURSE, YOUR EXCEL-LENCY!
IT WAS ALREADY DECIDED THAT HER HOLINESS WOULD COME TO THE CHURCH.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER PREPARED.
IT'S ENTIRELY MY FAULT FOR BEING SO INEPT.
I WAS SURE HE WOULD QUICKLY HAND OVER THE REPORTS AND SEND ME AWAY, BUT...
...IT LOOKS LIKE MY INVESTIGATION CAN CONTINUE.
NOT THAT I TRULY GRASP THEIR INTEN-TIONS YET.
IN THAT CASE, I'LL CONTINUE TO VISIT THE CHURCH FOR A BIT LONGER.
THE HOLY MAIDEN HAS ALSO PROPOSED A PLAN TO CREATE A CRAM SCHOOL AT THE ALMSHOUSE, SO THIS IS GOOD TIMING.
A CRAM SCHOOL?

SHE NOMINATED ME TO LEAD THIS PROJECT.
WELL, IT WASN'T REALLY A NOMI-NATION, BUT...
SHE WANTS TO BUILD A PLACE HERE TO TEACH SIMPLE READING, WRITING, AND ARITH-METIC...
...FOR THE CHILDREN WHO CAN'T ATTEND SCHOOL DUE TO THEIR CIRCUM-STANCES.
HOW SPLENDID!
THE HOLY MAIDEN AND ABRAN'S DISCIPLE ARE SO CARING!
BUT USING OUR CHURCH...? WHO SAID YOU COULD DECIDE THAT ALL ON YOUR OWN?
IT'S ONLY A PROPOSAL AT THIS STAGE.
HOWEVER, I BELIEVE IT WILL BENEFIT THE CHURCH GREATLY.

I WROTE UP SOME DOCUMENTS FOR THE PROJECT AFTER MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

THEY MENTION AN INCREASE IN DONATIONS TO THE CHURCH AND A RISE IN THEIR STATUS...

...WHICH I EXAGGERATED SLIGHTLY.

A GOOD REACTION!

PEOPLE WITH CLEAR GOALS LIKE HIM ARE EASIER TO DEAL WITH.

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS...

PAAAA (BEEEAM)

ぱぁああっ

I JUST KNEW YOU WERE CHOSEN BY ABRAN TO COME HERE!

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ASSIST AS WELL, DISCIPLE!

.....

FOR NOW... IT LOOKS LIKE THE PLAN WILL MOVE FORWARD.

SO LOUD...

1

2
PARALLEL WORLD
PC
P
3
4

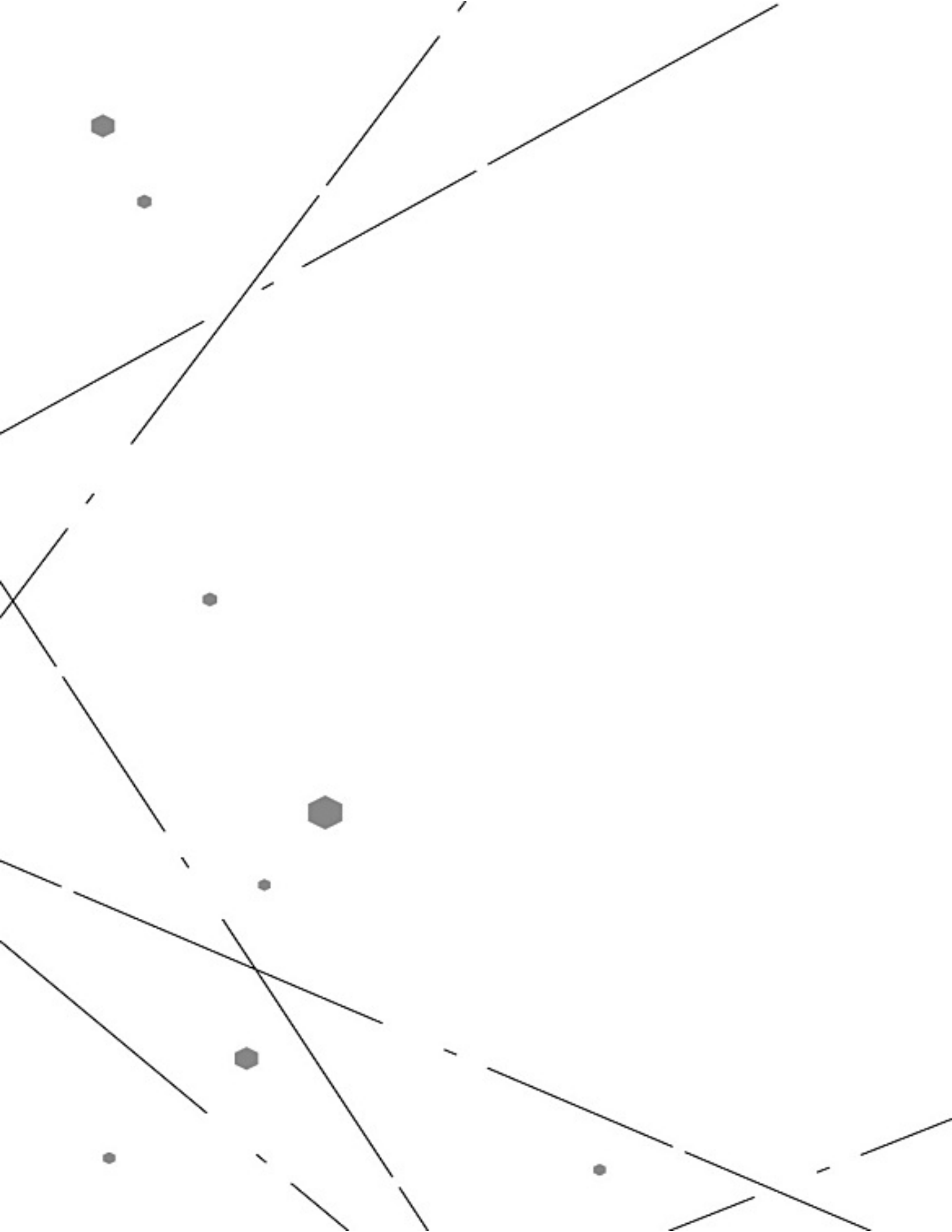
5
SOYO (RUSTLE) SOYO
そよ そよ
SOYOYO
そよよ…
=
DÉJÀ VU
again!!
6

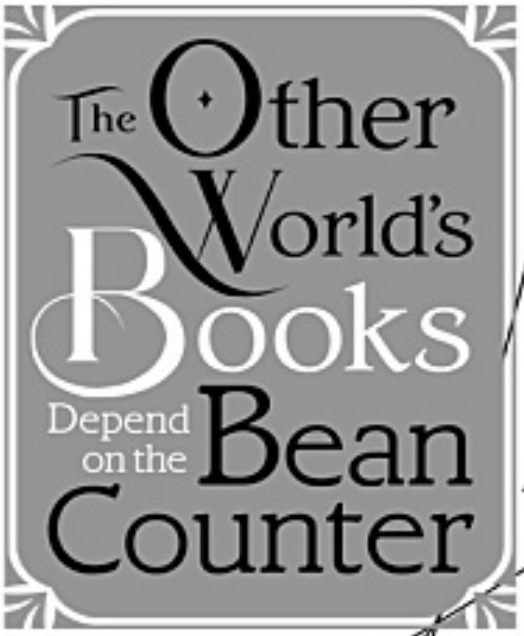
7
I JUST HEARD THAT THE HOLY MAIDEN SUCCESSFULLY PURIFIED THE MIASMA!

WHAT ...?

ARESH-SAMA... ISN'T BACK YET?
THE PURIFI-CATION WAS CARRIED OUT SAFELY, BUT...
...A PACK OF MAGIC BEASTS WAS REPORTED AT A NEARBY MOUNTAIN.
THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER DECIDED TO STAY BEHIND AND EXTERMINATE THEM.
...OH... I SEE.
OUR PLAN CENTERED AROUND COMPLETING THE PURIFI-CATION.
I WANTED ARESH-SAMA TO SEE IT BEFORE I SUBMITTED IT TO THE PRIME MINISTER.
BUT THE BARRIER HE APPLIED TO ME IS STILL WORKING...
...SO I'LL BE FINE.

KONDOU-SAMA.
AH!
.....
I RECEIVED THIS FROM THE EXPEDITION SQUADRON UPON THEIR RETURN.
THEY SAY IT'S FROM MASTER ARESH.




The Other World's Books Depend on the Bean Counter

Chapter
29

A BEAST'S TRACKS...
AT THAT SIZE, IT MUST BE A NEPOMUK.
A NEPOMUK!?
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO LIVE MUCH FARTHER NORTH...

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DRAWN HERE BY THE MIASMA. HOW VEXING.
IT CONSUMED TOO MANY MAGICULES AND WENT RABID...?

WE CAN'T IGNORE A NEPOMUK MIGRATING TO THE DEMON FOREST.
THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER WILL REMAIN HERE...
...AND HUNT THE MAGIC BEAST.
W-WAIT! HANG ON!
WE ONLY CAME HERE TO PURIFY THE MIASMA!
GATA (CLATTER)
YOU WANT US TO START A HUNT IN THE MIDDLE OF AN EXPEDITION?
THAT'S RIGHT.

WE CAN'T JUST GO STRAIGHT INTO A NEW MISSION WITHOUT GIVING OUR OFFICIAL REPORTS!
THE PURIFICATION EXPEDITION IS A MASSIVE DUTY FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.
ZAWA (ROAR)
DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS!
WE SHOULD RETURN HOME BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE!
OUR MEN ARE TIRED TOO.
WHY NOT RETURN TO THE ROYAL CAPITAL AND FORM A NEW UNIT TO TAKE OUT THE BEAST...?
THERE COULD BE OTHER BEASTS WHO HAVE TURNED VIOLENT FROM THE MIASMA AROUND THE VILLAGES AND TOWNS.
OUR DUTY IS TO PROTECT THE HOLY MAIDEN AND HER PARTY FROM THE BEASTS IN THE DEMON FOREST.
AFTER THEY'VE LEFT, WE CAN LEAVE THE REST TO THE SECOND ROYAL ORDER WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE.
I-I GUESS...

SEIICHIROU WOULD PROBABLY MAKE THE SAME DECISION.
ALL THE MORE SO BECAUSE OF THE MIASMA CONTAINMENT PROJECT.
IT'S IMPORTANT TO ACT BEFORE ANYONE GETS HURT...
...BUT ALSO GOING BACK FIRST WILL COST MORE TIME AND MONEY.
HAAH...
.....
FINE.
WE HAVE TROOPS WHO WILL BE ABLE TO SEND OUR REPORTS AHEAD TO THE ROYAL CAPITAL.
WE'LL USE THE NEXT TOWN UP AS OUR BASE.
YES, SIR!
WHAT DO YOU SAY, MEN? CAN YOU HANDLE ONE MORE MISSION?

WE'LL SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS ONCE WE ARRIVE IN TOWN TOMORROW, SO WE CAN HUNT IN SHIFTS.
CUT DOWN ANY CRAZED MAGIC BEASTS YOU FIND— NEPOMUK OR NOT!
YES, CAPTAIN !!
ZAZA (FWISH)
ZAZAZA

バサッ
BAGA (FWIP)

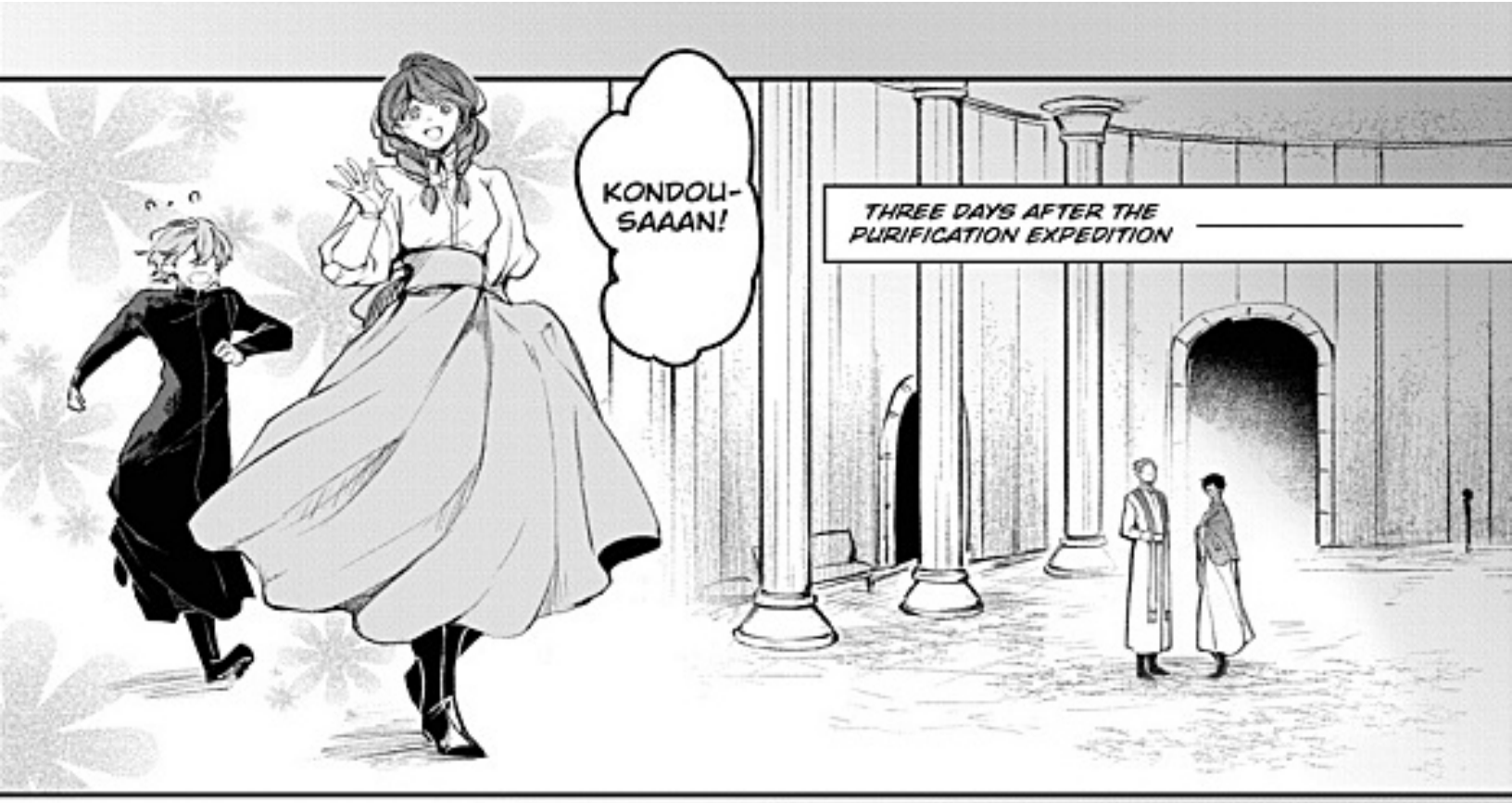
KIIN (SKREE)
BISHI (CRACK)
PAKI (CRICK)
PAKI
PAKI
PAKI
PAKI
FON (SHM)
GASA (RUSTLE)

Dear Seiichirou,
By now, the news has most likely reached you that...
...we decided to remain here in order to exterminate a magic beast.
While I am away, I ask you to take good care of your health...
...make sure to rest properly, and don't overwork yourself.
When it comes to food...
.....

DOGAGA (KABOOM)
DOSU (THNK)

I hope you'll fall asleep with my soul.
HM?
BUT WHAT A RELIEF... I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE BAD NEWS.
WHO IS HE? MY MOM!?
OH AND OH AND OH
...HIS SOUL ...?
ビクッ
BIKU (JOLT)
OH MY!
EXCUSE ME, MILAN-SAN.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS SENTENCE MEANS?
EH HEH HEH!
MASTER IS SO FULL OF PASSION, ISN'T HE?
HUH?
WHEN A KNIGHT REFERS TO THEIR "SOUL," THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT THEIR "FEELINGS."
TO PUT IT MORE SIMPLY...

I hope you'll fall asleep thinking of me by your side.


KONDOU-SAAAN!
THREE DAYS AFTER THE PURIFICATION EXPEDITION

THANK YOU!
!
PAA (BEAAM)
CONGRA-TULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SHIRAISHI-SAN.

I OFFER YOU MY HEARTFELT GRATITUDE.
I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR YOUR PURIFICATION OF THE MIASMA.
YOUR HOLI-NESS.

PO
(BLUSH)

AH... SHIRAI-SHI-SAN.
I'D LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT SOME THINGS THAT WEREN'T IN THE REPORTS.
COULD I ASK YOU ABOUT THE EXPEDITION?
WHY DON'T WE HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER, THEN?
I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE CRAM SCHOOL TOO!

IF YOU'D CARE TO JOIN US, SIEGVOLD-SAN...
OF COURSE.
I HAVE TO MAKE SURE THE DISCIPLE IS EATING PROPERLY.
COULD YOU PLEASE STOP CALLING ME THAT?
MY NAME IS KONDOU SEIICHIROU.

...ALL RIGHT, THEN...
...VERY WELL. I'LL CONCEDE.
I DON'T LIKE THE ATTENTION IT ATTRACTS.
BUT YOU ARE THE DISCIPLE...
THANK YOU, FATHER SIEGVOLD.
...MASTER SEIICHIROU.
EVERYTHING LOOKS SO YUMMY! ♪

MASTER SEIICHIROU HAS NO MAGICULE RESISTANCE.
HE HAS TO BE CAREFUL WITH EVERYTHING, INCLUDING FOOD.
TOO BAAAD!
YOU AREN'T HAVING ANY, ARE YOU?
NO.
KONDOU-SAN HAS TO BE CAREFUL IN WHAT HE EATS, OR ELSE HE'LL OVERDOSE AND DIE.
HUH ...?
NO... RESIS-TANCE?
BUT MAGICULES ARE FUEL, AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TAKE IN TOO MANY!
THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE— JUST LIKE AIR!
WELL, THE PARALLEL WORLD I'M FROM ISN'T LIKE HERE.
OUR FOOD AND AIR ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
AND YOUR HOLI-NESS ...?
I HAVE SOME SORT OF DIVINE PROTECTION, SO IT DOESN'T AFFECT ME.

I TOLD HIM TO STOP PROSELYTIZING THAT WEIRD VERSION OF ME!
MASTER SEIICHIROU IS UNDERGOING TRIBULATIONS TO WORK FOR THE GOOD OF THIS KINGDOM.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?

YOU COULD REALLY DIE!?
I WON'T DIE UNLESS I CONSUME TOO MANY MAGICULES.
!?
PLEASE IGNORE HIM, SELIO-SAN.
I'M GAINING RESISTANCE, LITTLE BY LITTLE!

RIGHT.
I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT THE PURIFICATION ITSELF.

SO ABOUT THE EXPEDITION, SHIRAISHI-SAN...
PUSHU (PSSSH)
VOID AGAIN

...THIS TIME, ONCE THE MIASMA WAS GONE, LIGHT STARTED POURING IN AND BUDS SPROUTED ON PART OF THE TREE.
THERE WERE NO CHANGES DURING THE FIRST TWO EXPEDITIONS, BUT...
...THE BUDS ARE PROOF THAT THE PURIFICATION IS FINISHED.
THE SORCERERS SAID...
BUT WHILE THEY WERE INVESTIGATING THE AREA...
...THEY FOUND FOOTPRINTS FROM A BEAST CALLED A NEPOMUK.
PIKU! (FLINCH)
THEY ALSO SAID MAGICULE READINGS WERE BELOW NORMAL LEVELS.

VILLAGERS NEARBY WITNESSED IT TOO, SO ARESH-SAN WANTED TO EXTERMINATE THE BEAST QUICKLY...
A NEPOMUK?
THEY'RE LARGE AND EXTREMELY AGGRES-SIVE MAGIC BEASTS.
IF THEY CAN RESUPPLY AT THE VILLAGE, IT WOULD BE MORE EFFICIENT TO STAY THERE INSTEAD OF RETURNING.
A ONE-WAY TRIP FROM THE DEMON FOREST TO THE ROYAL CAPITAL TAKES THREE DAYS.
BUT...
GYU (SQUEEZE)
キュ…
THAT'S WHAT I WOULD DO.

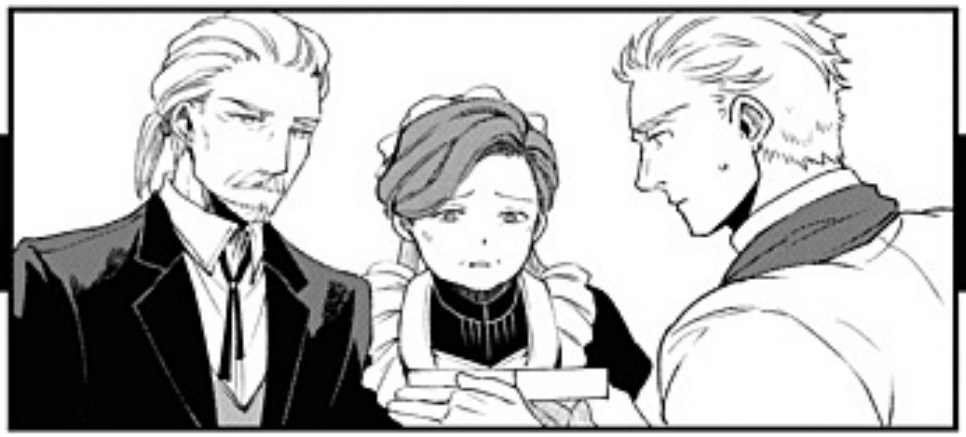
...ARESH-SAMA IS EXTREMELY STRONG AND CAN USE MAGIC SPELLS.

HE'LL BE FINE...

NO...

MASTER SEIICHIROU? ARE YOU FEELING UNWELL ...?

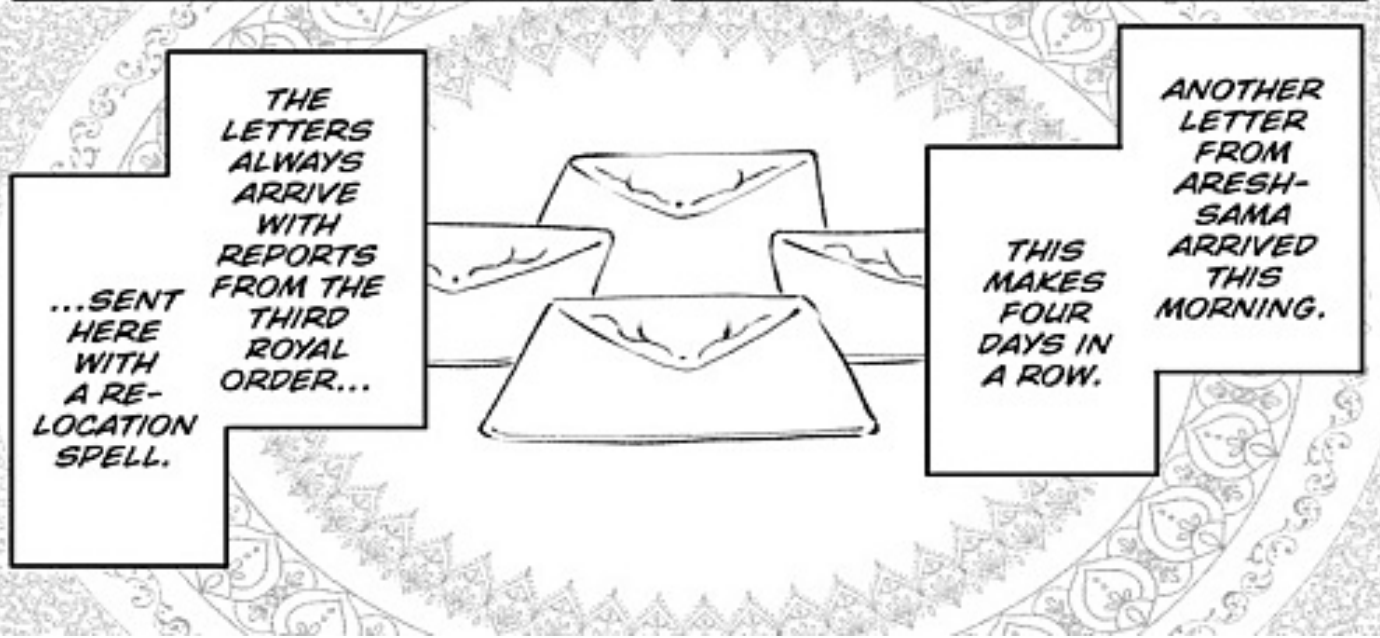
HE'LL BE JUST FINE...

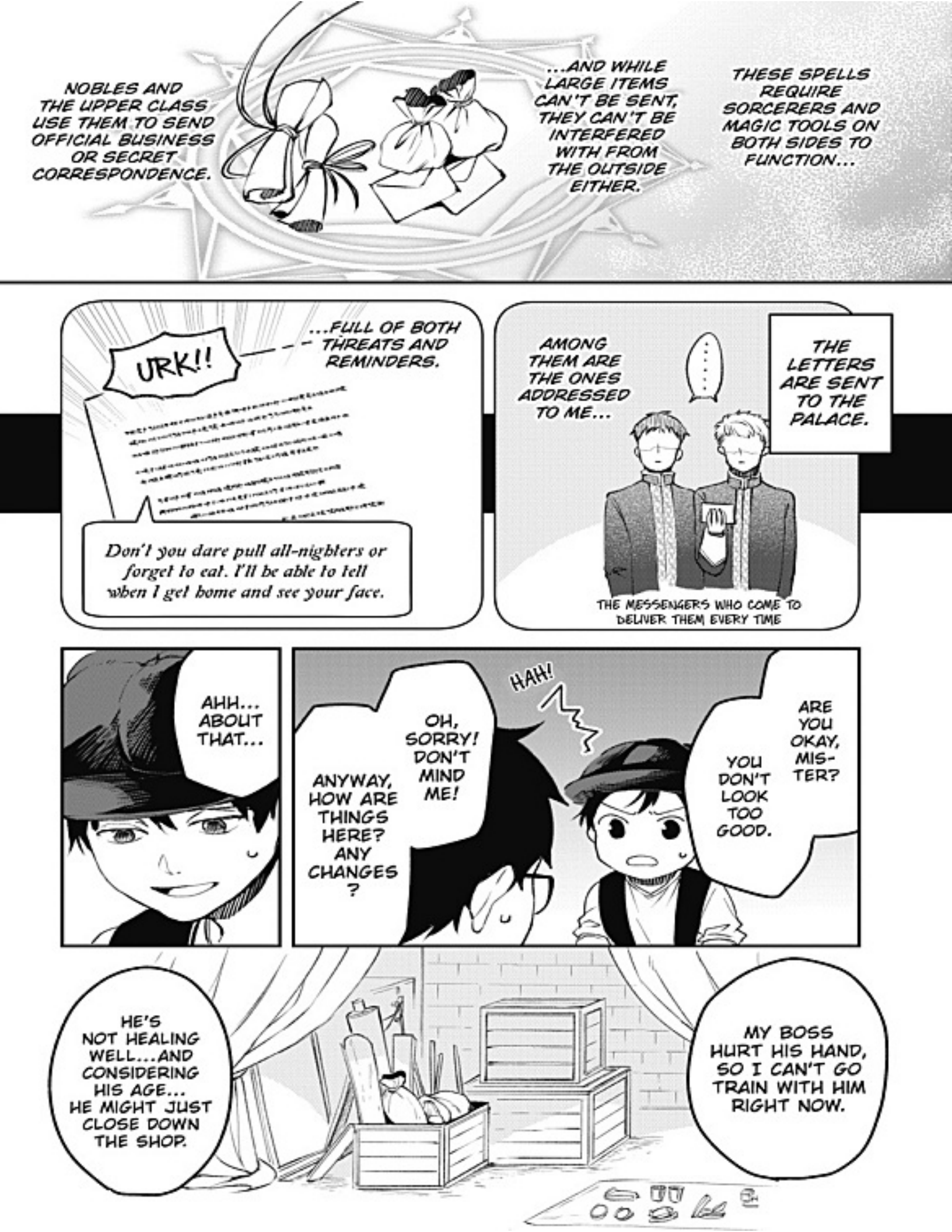


HEY, MISTER!

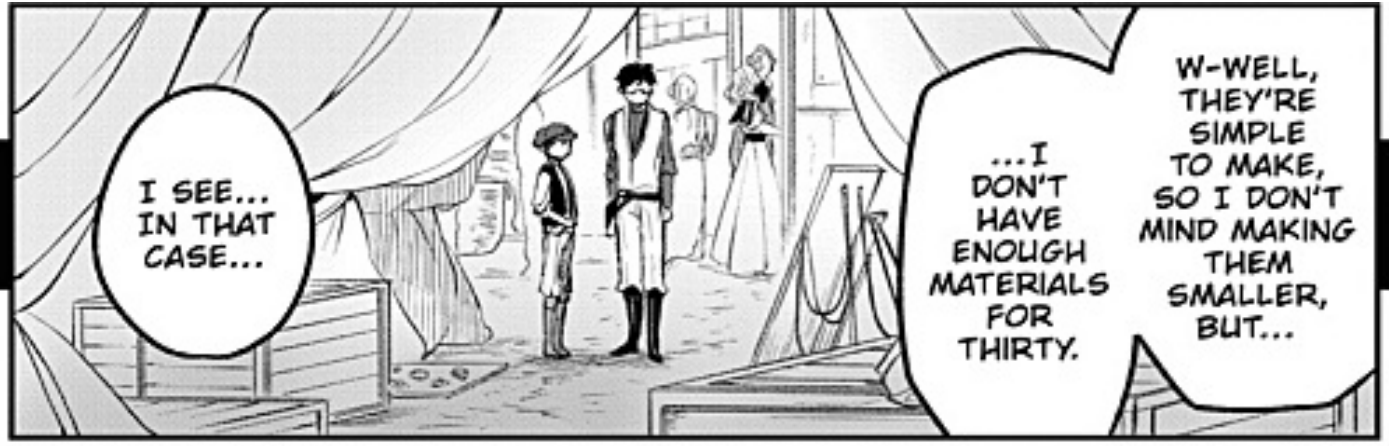
YOU'RE NOT WORKING TODAY?
NO, I THOUGHT I'D GO OUT FOR A CHANGE OF PACE...

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
YOU LOOK WELL, SIGMA-KUN.

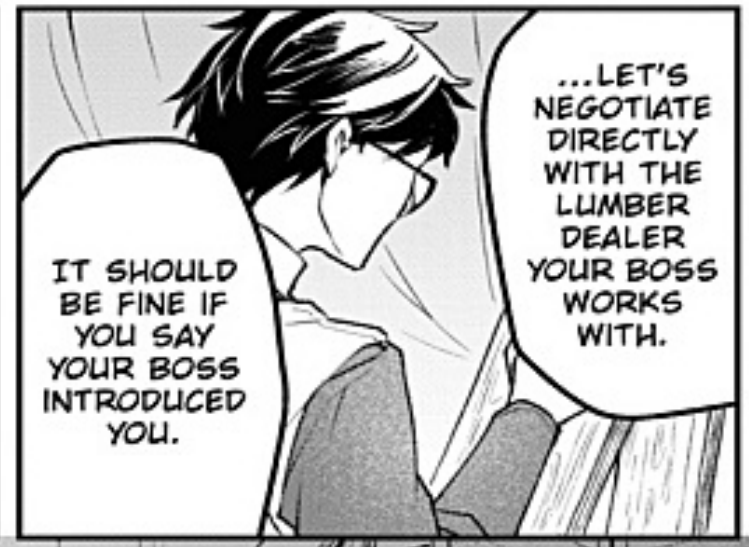

THE LETTERS ALWAYS ARRIVE WITH REPORTS FROM THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER...
...SENT HERE WITH A RE-LOCATION SPELL.
ANOTHER LETTER FROM ARESH-SAMA ARRIVED THIS MORNING.
THIS MAKES FOUR DAYS IN A ROW.


NOBLES AND THE UPPER CLASS USE THEM TO SEND OFFICIAL BUSINESS OR SECRET CORRESPONDENCE.
...AND WHILE LARGE ITEMS CAN'T BE SENT, THEY CAN'T BE INTERFERED WITH FROM THE OUTSIDE EITHER.
THESE SPELLS REQUIRE SORCERERS AND MAGIC TOOLS ON BOTH SIDES TO FUNCTION...
URK!!
...FULL OF BOTH THREATS AND REMINDERS.
Don't you dare pull all-nighters or forget to eat. I'll be able to tell when I get home and see your face.
AMONG THEM ARE THE ONES ADDRESSED TO ME...
THE LETTERS ARE SENT TO THE PALACE.
THE MESSENGERS WHO COME TO DELIVER THEM EVERY TIME
AHH... ABOUT THAT...
HAH!
OH, SORRY! DON'T MIND ME!
ANYWAY, HOW ARE THINGS HERE? ANY CHANGES?
ARE YOU OKAY, MISTER?
YOU DON'T LOOK TOO GOOD.
HE'S NOT HEALING WELL...AND CONSIDERING HIS AGE... HE MIGHT JUST CLOSE DOWN THE SHOP.
MY BOSS HURT HIS HAND, SO I CAN'T GO TRAIN WITH HIM RIGHT NOW.

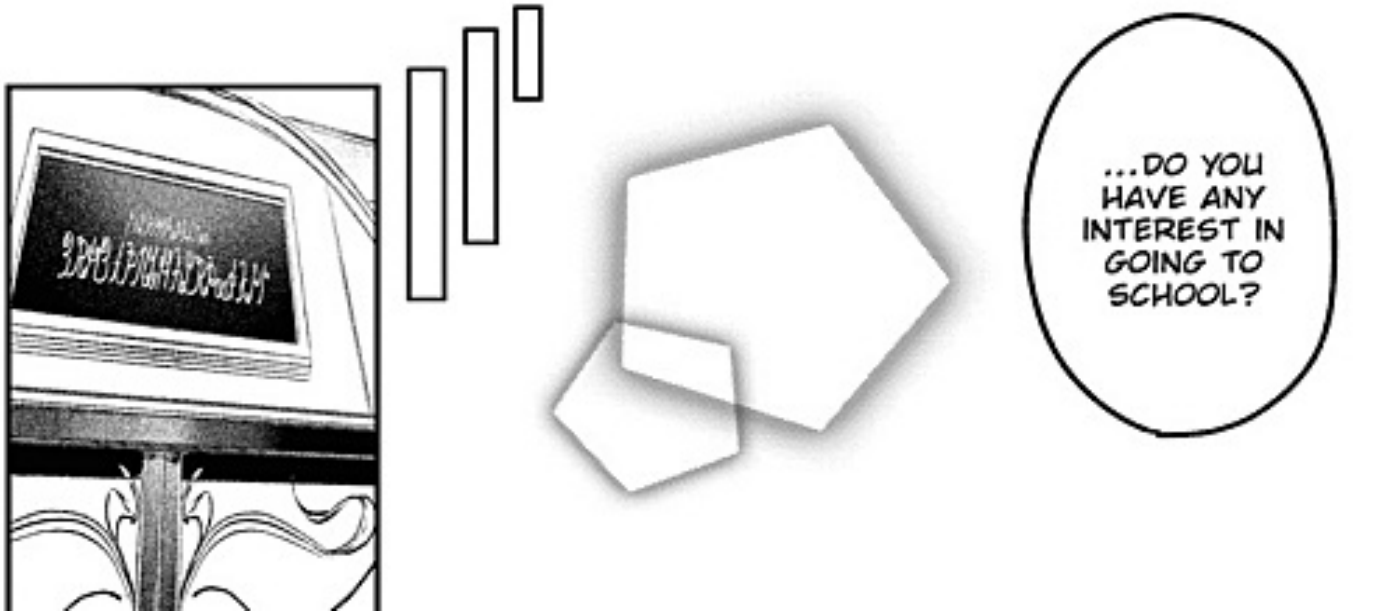
I KEEP LOOKING FOR A NEW SHOP, BUT...
...I'M JUST A KID... SO THEY KEEP PUTTING IT OFF...
PERFECT TIMING, THEN.
HUH?
REMEMBER THE ABACUSES I HAD YOU MAKE LAST TIME?
I'LL NEED SOME MORE OF THOSE.
YOU MEAN IT!?
YOU PAY REALLY WELL, MISTER, SO THAT'S AWESOME!
HOW MANY DO YOU WANT?
GURU (SPIN)
GURU
THIRTY.
THIRTY !?
YEP. THIRTY.
I ALSO WANT THEM A BIT SMALLER THAN LAST TIME.


I SEE... IN THAT CASE...
...I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MATERIALS FOR THIRTY.
W-WELL, THEY'RE SIMPLE TO MAKE, SO I DON'T MIND MAKING THEM SMALLER, BUT...

I'LL PAY FOR THE MATERIALS TOO, OF COURSE.
THEN... THAT SHOULD BE FINE...


...LET'S NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH THE LUMBER DEALER YOUR BOSS WORKS WITH.
IT SHOULD BE FINE IF YOU SAY YOUR BOSS INTRODUCED YOU.

ALSO, SIGMA-KUN...
...


...DO YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN GOING TO SCHOOL?

AH! KONDOOOU!
OFF?
GABA CLURCHO
がば
HELLO, IST-SAN.
...HUH? SOME-THING'S OFF.
YOUR MAGICAL ENERGY IS DIFFERENT.
?
OH... RIGHT. THE THIRD ORDER'S STILL GONE.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, DID YOU BRING ME A SACRED RELIC, KONDOU?
すく
SUKU (SPRING)
YOU'RE STILL ON ABOUT THAT?
PLEASE REMEMBER MY ANSWER THIS TIME. I SAID IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.
WHY DO YOU WANT ONE SO BADLY?
WITH ONE OF THOSE, WE COULD DO ALL THE EXPERIMENTS WE WANTED.
BECAUSE THEY'VE GOT SO MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY STORED IN 'EM!
IT... STORES MAGICAL ENERGY?
ISN'T THAT JUST A MAGIC TOOL...?
HAVE YOU SEEN A SACRED RELIC BEFORE, IST-SAN?
YEP! YOU PRAY TO 'EM WHEN YOU GET BAPTIZED AT SIX.

BESIDES, I HAVE LOTS OF MAGICAL ENERGY.
THAT'S WHY CHILDREN BORN WITH TOO MUCH OF IT...
...LEARN HOW TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY THEY POSSESS AT THE CHURCH.
SACRED RELICS THAT "STORE" MAGICAL ENERGY.
WHERE DOES THAT MAGICAL ENERGY ACTUALLY GO?

TRAINING TO "REDUCE" THEIR AMOUNT OF ENERGY...
...SACRED RELICS THAT "STORE" MAGICAL ENERGY...
...THE "DESTINATION" OF THAT GATHERED ENERGY...
SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT ABOUT THIS.
WHAT PART SHOULD I INVESTIGATE FIRST?
SEI!
FINISHED YOUR WORK AT THE SORCERY DEPARTMENT?
PATAA
PATA (PATTER)
GOOD TIMING!
NOR ...
...THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK Y—
KOTSU (TAK)
KONDOU.
Chapter 30

COME WITH ME. WE NEED TO TALK.
YOUR HIGH-NESS?
NO. YOU COME TOO.
AH, THEN I'LL HEAD BACK FIRST...
...HUH ...?

TEA～
KON-DOU.
I HEARD YOU WERE COZYING UP TO YUA THE OTHER DAY.
COZYING UP...?
WE REALLY ONLY DISCUSSED WORK...
WORK?
YES.
GATAN (RATTLE)
ガタン
WITH WHAT!? TELL ME EVERY-THING!
I'M ASSISTING THE HOLY MAIDEN.
KIRAN (GLINT)
キラン

WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY MEAN, NORBERT-KUN?
SEI...ARE YOU UP TO NO GOOD?
FUYOYO (SWAY)
SASA (SWISH)
IN THAT CASE, PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THESE DOCUMENTS.
FINE!
A SCHOOL FOR THE ALMSHOUSE KIDS AND IMPOVERISHED CHILDREN IN TOWN?
DID HER HOLINESS REALLY COME UP WITH THIS?
LOOK AT THIS. IT'S PRACTICALLY WATERTIGHT ...
ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T WRI—
GASAGASA (RUSTLE)
F3OMP!!!
WHAT A WONDER-FUL PLAN!
ONLY THE BEST FROM YUA!
SHE'S THINKING NOT ONLY OF THE CHILDREN, BUT OF THE KINGDOM AS A WHOLE!

I IMAGINE SHE WAS WAITING TO SPEAK TO YOU...
...UNTIL THE PROJECT WAS FULLY MAPPED OUT.
BUT IF YUA HAD A PLAN LIKE THIS...
...SHE SHOULD HAVE TAKEN IT TO ME, NOT THIS PEASANT...
THANKS FOR THE ASSIST, CAPTAIN MAKOVSKA!
YUMMY♥!
GASHO CMUNCH GASHO
HOWEVER, IN ALL YOUR WISDOM, YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT IT AHEAD OF TIME...
...AND NOW YOUR HIGHNESS CAN HELP MAKE HER WISH COME TRUE...
QUITE SO.
NOW, IF YOU SUPPORTED THE PROJECT WITH YOUR PERSONAL WEALTH AND NOT FUNDS FROM THE NATIONAL TREASURY...
...IT WOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THIS WAS YOUR OWN PERSONAL DECISION...
GATA (RATTLE)
I WAS JUST THINKING THAT! YUA AND I ARE TRULY ON THE SAME PAGE!

MANLY...
MANLY...
MANLY...
SHE'LL THINK THAT'S A VERY MANLY THING TO DO.
THAT'S HOW IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN OUR WORLD.
OH! I SEE!
I MEAN, I HAD THE SAME THOUGHT!
LET'S GO TALK TO YUA RIGHT AWAY!
WHOOOOOOA!!!
PITA (FREEZE)
.....

THE NATIONAL BUDGET IS ALREADY PRETTY TIED UP WITH THE MIASMA BARRIER PROJECT.
...AND COMPENSATION FOR THE MISAPPRO-PRIATED HOLY MAIDEN FUNDS IS ONLY JUST STARTING TO TAKE SHAPE. THERE'S ALMOST NOTHING LEFT OVER.
THE SORCERERS ARE GETTING A BUDGET INCREASE TOO...
...SEI ...
...YOU WANT TO CARRY OUT THE PROJECT WITH HIS HIGHNESS'S OWN MONEY...?

URK ...
SO THAT'S HOW A WORKAHOLIC LIKE YOU WAS BORN, HUH, SEI?
I'M HEADING BACK.
PLUS, IT'S TRUE THAT SELF-SACRIFICE IS SEEN AS A VIRTUE IN MY HOME COUNTRY.

KONDOU.

HERE, SHARE IT WITH THE ACCOUNTING DEPART-MENT.
...DOES HIS HIGHNESS KNOW ABOUT THIS?
DON'T WORRY.
HE ORDERED ME TO GIVE IT TO YOU.
NOR WAS BORN TO A MISTRESS LOWER IN STATUS AND ADOPTED BY ANOTHER FAMILY.
PRINCE YURIUS STANDS ABOVE EVERYONE AS THE HEIR TO THE THRONE.

THEY'RE BOTH CHILDREN OF THE CURRENT KING — BROTHERS BY BLOOD.
A DONATION FROM HIS HIGHNESS?
... YEAH.
CAN YOU EVEN EAT THIS, SEI?
I LOVED THIS FOOD WHEN I WAS A KID.
DID YOU?
YEAH! IT'S SO SWEET AND CRUNCHY.
...HUH.
HE KNOWS WHAT FOODS HIS LITTLE BROTHER LIKES?

THAT REMINDS ME, SEI.
DIDN'T YOU WANT TO ASK ME SOMETHING?
YOU'RE ALREADY EIGHTEEN, RIGHT? AREN'T YOU TOO OLD TO GET EXCITED ABOUT SWEETS?
AH-HA-HA...
AH...
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A SACRED RELIC, NOR?
REFERENCE ROOM

A SACRED RELIC?
OF COURSE!
THEY'RE THOSE THINGS WITH MAGIC CRYSTALS IN 'EM THAT ABSORB MAGICAL ENERGY.
IS THAT COMMON KNOWL-EDGE?
ROYAL FAMILY MEMBERS AND CHURCH BISHOPS ALL KNOW ABOUT THEM.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SECRET, BUT THERE'S NO HARM IN TELLING YOU, SEI.
IT'S A STATE SECRET!?
NO WONDER EVERYONE IS SAYING DIFFERENT THINGS.
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MAGICAL ENERGY THEY ABSORB?
THEY USE THEM TO APPLY A PROTECTIVE BARRIER AROUND THE ROYAL CAPITAL AND KEEP OUT MAGIC BEASTS.
NOT THAT BARRIERS THEMSELVES ARE SO UNUSUAL...
IT'S JUST THAT THE ONE AROUND THE ROYAL CAPITAL IS KINDA SPECIAL...

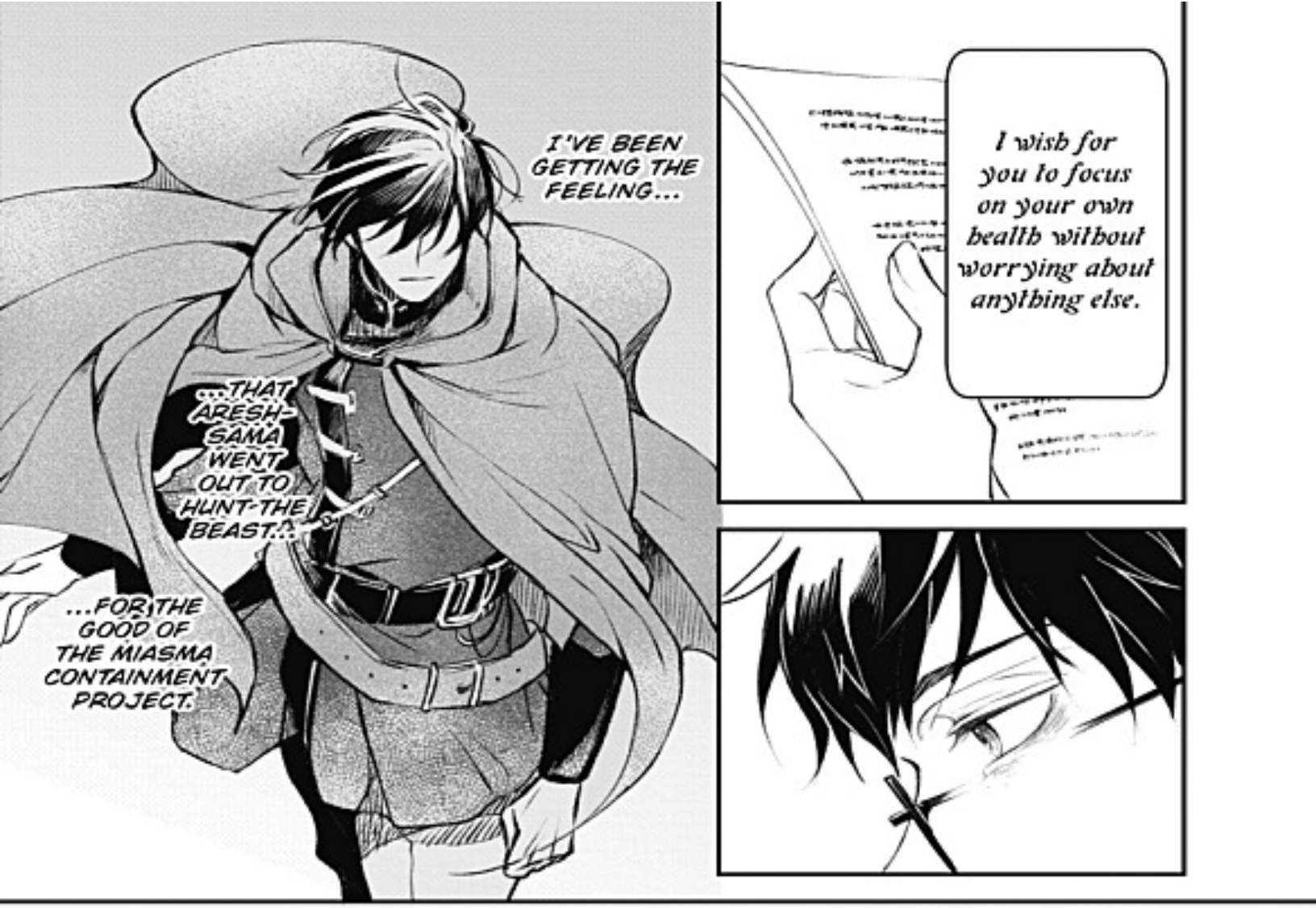
I NEVER EXPECTED ARESH-SAMA, MUCH LESS THE PRIME MINISTER, TO NOT BE AWARE OF THIS.
A SPECIAL BARRIER WITH OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES.
IT DEFLECTS SPELL ATTACKS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TOO.
NORMAL BARRIERS NEED MAGICAL ENERGY...
THEY CAN ALSO REMAIN ACTIVE FOR A WHILE ONCE THEY'RE UP.
...A MAGIC CIRCLE, AND MAGIC STONES TO ACTIVATE.
HOWEVER, THE BARRIER AROUND THE ROYAL CAPITAL REQUIRES CONSTANT ENERGY REPLENISH-MENTS...
...AND IF IT'S SEVERED EVEN ONCE, IT HAS TO BE REBUILT ENTIRELY.
IT'S A "SPECIAL CONSTRUCT."
JA (CLACK)...

THAT'S WHERE THE CHURCH COMES INTO THE PICTURE.
THEY HAVE SOMETHING THAT CONTINUES AT ALL TIMES.
—"PRAYERS."
IF THEY HAD A SPECIAL MAGIC TOOL TO TRANSFER THE OFFERED MAGICAL ENERGY...
...INTO SACRED RELICS FOR STORAGE...
ぴた…
PITA (FREEZE)
I KNEW IT...

I'VE LEARNED THREE OTHER THINGS BY GOING OVER THE CHURCH'S PAST DOCUMENTS.
THERE'S A STRANGE INCREASE IN FUNDS.
③ THE KINGDOM PROVIDES MONETARY SUPPORT FOR THE CHURCH, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF MAGICAL ENERGY.
② THAT MAGICAL ENERGY IS USED TO MAKE THE ROYAL CAPITAL'S PROTECTIVE BARRIER.
① PRAYERS (MAGICAL ENERGY) FROM THE CITIZENS ARE KEPT IN THE CHURCH'S SACRED RELICS.
HOWEVER, THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC NUMBERS...
...DESCRIBING HOW MUCH MAGICAL ENERGY IS ACTUALLY USED.
PHEW...
GI (CREAK)
I KNOW IT'S THEIR STATE RELIGION, BUT THIS MUST BE WHY THE GOVERNMENT GIVES THEM SO MUCH FUNDING.
IT SEEMS EVEN THE HOLY MAIDEN SUMMONING USED SOME OF THIS ENERGY.
...AND IS BRINGING IN MONEY, I NEED MORE DETAILED INFORMATION.
...BUT SEEING THAT IT'S TREATED AS AN ENERGY SOURCE...
MAYBE THAT'S NATURAL, SINCE THIS IS A STATE SECRET...

...IT'S MORNING ...?
GATA (CLATTER)
I SHOULD STRIKE WHILE THE IRON'S HOT. I'LL GO TO THE CHURCH AND...
I CAN HANDLE ONE ALL-NIGHTER AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
I'LL JUST GO HOME EARLY TODAY.
FURA (WOBBLE)
.....

With the help of the village at the foot of the mountain, we have no shortage of supplies...
...but nepomuk have large territories, so our investigation is taking some time.
Your church visits are probably almost over by now, but you should still be careful.
Talk to Ciro if you feel unwell.


I'VE BEEN GETTING THE FEELING...
...THAT ARESH-SAMA WENT OUT TO HUNT THE BEAST...
...FOR THE GOOD OF THE MIASMA CONTAINMENT PROJECT.
I wish for you to focus on your own health without worrying about anything else.

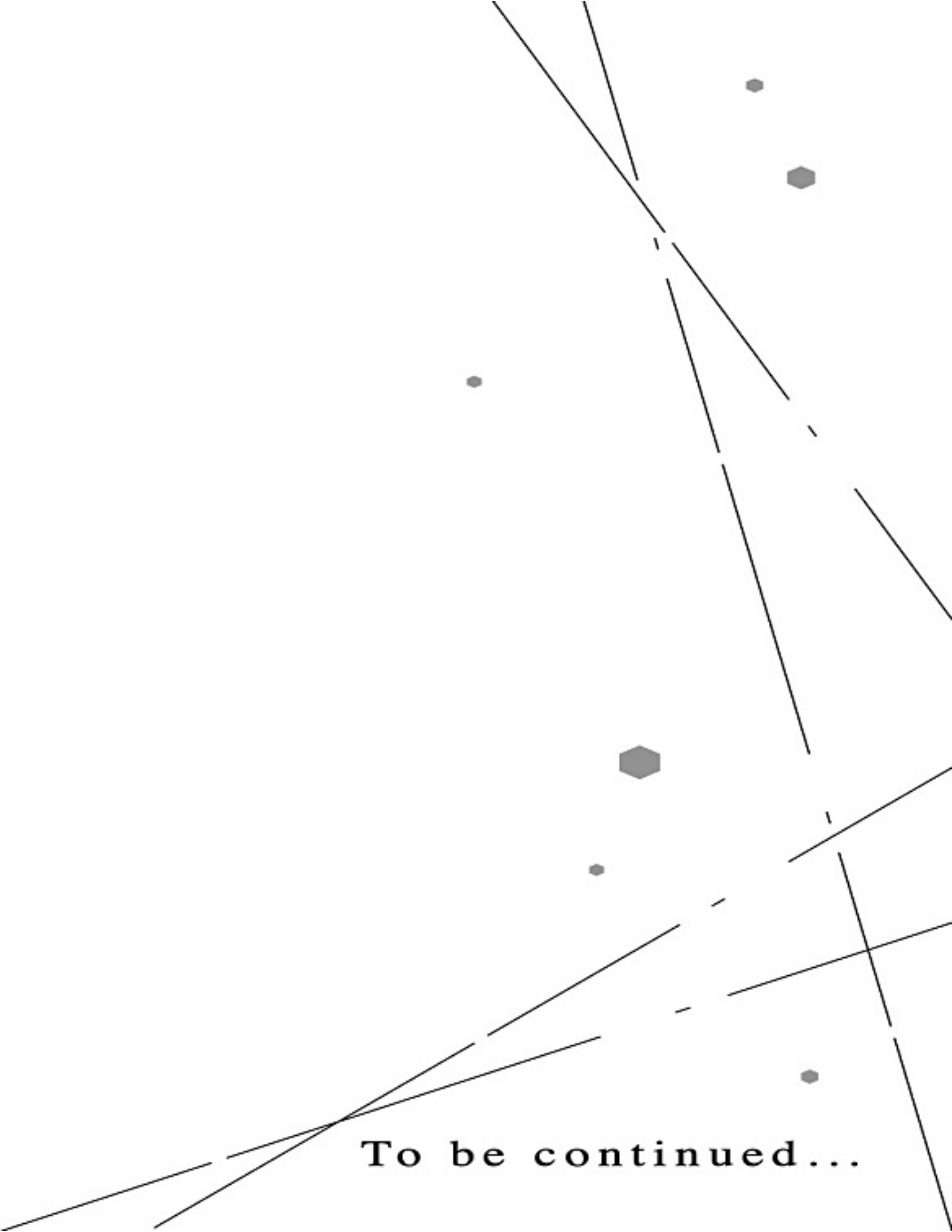
HE ALSO GETS PETULANT WHEN VALTOM-SAN TEASES HIM.
...BUT, LIKE A CHILD, HE POUTS IF YOU DON'T GIVE HIM ATTENTION.
HE'S SMART, TALENTED, AND HAS A COLD BEAUTY AND WAY OF SPEAKING THAT MAKES HIM SEEM LIKE AN ADULT...

THIS SUDDEN BEAST HUNT...
C'MON, IT'S TIME TO GO!!
GYU (SQUEEZE)
PESHI (SLAP)
PESHI
.....
WHEN THERE'S A JOB HE DOESN'T WANT TO DO, HE CLINGS TO ME, PROBABLY TO SUPPRESS THE URGE TO AVOID WORK.

...PROBABLY MEANS HE WANTS ME TO PRAISE HIM.
IF SOMETHING HAPPENED...
...TO ARESH-SAMA...
ALL THE REPLIES I WROTE ARE STILL IN MY DESK DRAWER— I'VE LEFT THEM UNSENT, SO...
...WHO AM I TO TALK?
KOFF!

Now that we're apart...
...it's hard to believe there was ever a time we weren't together.
GYU (SQUEEZE)

I WONDER IF ANOTHER LETTER FROM ARESH-SAMA WILL ARRIVE TODAY...
AH!
?


To be continued...

BONUS CHAPTER
THE JOURNEY'S OUTCOME DEPENDS ON THEIR FEELINGS

I'M GOING NOW, SEIICHIROU.

TAKE CARE OF SEIICHIROU WHILE I'M ON THE EXPEDITION.
OF COURSE.
CHECK ON HIM TO MAKE SURE HE'S NOT SLEEP-DEPRIVED.
HE GETS OBSESSED WITH WORK WHEN I'M NOT AROUND.
AS YOU WISH.
BE SURE HE'S FINISHING HIS LUNCHES.
YOU CAN ADD MORE TSUHASH TO THE MENU.
YES, MASTER.
MAKE HIM REST ON HIS DAYS OFF...
...AND BE SURE TO ASK WHERE HE'S GOING IF HE LEAVES THE HOUSE.
...MAS-TER.
IF HE LIES AND GOES TO WORK ON HIS DAYS OFF—
YOUNG MASTER.

KOTSU (TAK) KOTSU
コツ コツ…
IT'S YOUR FIRST EXPEDITION MISSION SINCE WE STARTED LIVING IN THIS MANOR.
MASTER KONDOU WILL SIMPLY BE WAITING FOR YOU IN A DIFFERENT LOCATION THAN USUAL.
I UNDER-STAND YOUR CONCERN FOR HIM...
...BUT THERE IS NO NEED TO LET IT TROUBLE YOU SO.
WE HERE WILL PAY CLOSE ATTEN-TION...
...TO MASTER KONDOU'S HEALTH AND CONDITION.
IT SHOWS JUST HOW STRONG YOUR FEELINGS FOR HIM ARE.

MASTER KONDOU HAS STARTED TO GAIN SOME MAGICULE RESISTANCE AND...
...IS GROWING ACCUSTOMED TO LIFE IN THIS WORLD.
I THINK IT WOULD BE OPTIMAL TO GIVE HIM SOME SPACE AND SIMPLY WATCH OVER HIM INSTEAD.
VALTOM ...
HOH-HOH-HOH!
THIS TIME APART COULD BE...
...A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH OF YOU TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR OWN FEELINGS...
HOWEVER, PLEASE DO NOT FORGET...

...THAT WHILE HE MAY SEE WORK AS HIS NUMBER ONE "PRIORITY"...
...I SUSPECT HIS GREATEST "DESIRE" IS TO SEE YOU COME HOME SAFELY, YOUNG MASTER.
I AGREE.
HE'LL SMILE AND SAY "WELCOME HOME" WHEN YOU'RE BACK!
"WELCOME HOME"... HUH?

ARESH-SAMA!
...I HOPE THAT'S TRUE...
SEIICHI-ROU.

YOU'RE LEAVING, AREN'T YOU?
YOU DIDN'T NEED TO GET OUT OF BED.
YES, I DID.
YOU'RE GOING ON AN IMPORTANT EXPEDI-TION...
...SO I HAVE TO BE HERE TO SEE YOU OFF!
GYU (SQUEEZE)
!
ARESH-SAMA...
WHAT IS IT?

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOUR SAFE RETURN.
PLEASE BE CAREFUL NOT TO INJURE YOURSELF.
?
I CAN HEAL MYSELF IF I DO.
OH... WELL, THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
...I SUPPOSE I JUST DON'T WANT YOU GETTING HURT AT ALL...
...SO...
UM...
I'M SORRY. A CIVILIAN SHOULDN'T SAY SUCH A THING TO A KNIGHT...

!?
Don't worry. They can't see us behind my cloak.
THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE HERE!

HE'S ON HIS WAY NOW.
THAT'S RIGHT.
MASTER KONDOU ...
...MAY I ENTER YOUR ROOM TO CLEAN IT WHEN I'M FINISHED WITH THIS ONE?
YES, THANK YOU.
I'M ALMOST FINISHED WITH MASTER'S ROOM, SO I'LL BE THERE SHORTLY.
CHIRA (GLANCE)

...HUH?

THIS... IT CAN'T BE...
SPECIAL THANKS!!
• EDITORS (H-SAN AND U-SAN)
• COVER DESIGNER (SAVA DESIGN-SAN)
• ALL MY READERS
THE GUILD MEMBERS AT CROSS BONE TOO
THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

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